

TWO
SERMONS
ON THE THIRD
OF THE LAMENTATIONS
OF IEREMIE:

Preached at Hanwell in the first yeare of
his Maiesties raigne, 1602. The one
by I. D. the other by R. C.

PHILIP. 3. 1.

*It grieneth me not to write the same things to you, and
for you it is a sure thing.*

ISAIAH 55. 3.

Hearken, and your soule shall live.



AT LONDON

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of Paules Church in London. 1608. V.R.

MEMORANDUM

TO : THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
FROM : THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
SUBJECT: [Illegible]

1. [Illegible]

2. [Illegible]

3. [Illegible]

4. [Illegible]

5. [Illegible]

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7. [Illegible]

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9. [Illegible]

10. [Illegible]

11. [Illegible]

12. [Illegible]



To the Christian Reader.



Having occasion to revise notes of certaine Sermons taken by penne from their mouthes, whose labours both in word and writing haue been and are no lesse profitable than acceptable vnto Gods Church, I thought it not amisse to take some small paines to copie out some of them, that if perhaps they should be thought worthie of publike view, they might be offered to the light : if not, they might be reserued for more pruiate vse. Amongst the rest, I iudged these two Sermons not the vnfittest for such a purpose, and so did others, whose encouragement also I had for the publishing of them. They were preached in the beginning of his Maiesties raigne, at that time when generall humiliation by fasting, was by authoritie enioyned vpon occasion of the Pestilence, then dangerously dispersed: which albeit through Gods mercifull providence it be now well allayed, yet the infection of sinne, the very true cause thereof, still remaineth and gathereth new strength. For the staying whereof, if any remedie may be gotten hence, I hope for more easie pardon, from the authors, of my boldenes in publishing: and from the reader for

To the Christian Reader.

my many faylings in penning these their labors. I did my best in taking from them, and offering vnto thee, that, and in a manner nothing but that which they then deliuered. The substance of the matter I doubt not, is all sound, and will much content a wise and well affected heart. The manner and forme of words and sentences is more imperfect than in the deliuerie it was, or now might haue beene, if the authors had either penned it before the preaching thereof, or vndertaken the thorow polishing of it since. But howsoever, sith that could not bee obtained which might haue beene wished, my desire was greater to satisfie thirstie soules with this that is done, then was my feare to offend curious heads and itching eares by the manner of doing it.

JOHN WINSTON.



THE FIRST SERMON.

Lamentations, chap. 3. vers. 48. &c.

48 Mine eye casteth out riuers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

49 Mine eye droppeth without stay, and ceaseth not.

50 Till the Lord looke downe and beholde from heauen.

51 Mine eye breaketh mine heart, because of all the daughters of my citie.

52 Mine enemies chased me sore like a bird without cause.

53 They shut vp my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone vpon me.

54 Waters flowed ouer my head, then thought I, I am destroyed.



ALL these words doe containe a Lamentation of Ieremie, and of the rest of Gods people for the iudgements of God on his Church and on Ierusalem his owne citie: and for the miserie and calamitie that lay vpon their whole state. After this sort they bewaile their heauie case: *Mine eye casteth out riuers of water, &c.*

Now this Lamentation is set forth,

1. Partly by the manner of it, and

2. Partly by the causes of it.

The diuision.

A 3

1 The

1 The manner of it is declared in the foure former verses, and that by diuers circumstances : namely,

1 By the greatnesse of it : for in regard of the miserie of the daughter of his people, hee did not onely moisten his eyes with teares, but sent forth riuers of teares, vers. 48. which is an excessiue kinde of speech vsuall in the Scriptures, and signifying that he wept abundantly.

2 It is set out by the continuance of it. *Mine eye droppeth without stay, and ceaseth not*, vers. 49. Neither shall it cease, but I will continue lamenting till the Lord looke downe from heauen, and shew some signe that hee doth beholde and pitie our estate, vers. 50.

3 Their lamentation is set out by the sinceritie of it, that it proceeded from trueth and vprightnesse: *Mine eye breaketh mine heart*, vers. 51. That is, the things that I see with mine eye, doe cause me to lament wonderfully : so heauie is the case of all the daughters of my citie, that it euen breaketh my very heart.

2 The causes of it are of two sorts:

1 Inward, which was griefe of heart, vers. 51.

2 Outward, which was the crueltie of their enemies : which crueltie is set forth :

1 By a similitude taken from fowlers : *Mine enemies haue chased me sore like a bird*, vers. 52. Implying thereby that they made it a sport, a recreation and trade to pursue Gods seruants : they did as it were goe a hawking after innocent and harmelesse soules.

2 Their crueltie is described by a comparison taken from hunters, who vsed to digge pits to the intent that great beasts might fall into them, and so be intrapped: and then they would throw stones at them, or vse some such meanes to kill them, when they durst not goe downe into the pit where they were.

Such

Such were the plots and endeuours of their aduersaries; they were as cunning and as eager in their attempts against the people of God, as men would be in killing a Beare or a Lion, that otherwise would kill them if they were at libertie, vers. 53.

- 3 Lastly, their crueltie is set out by a comparison drawne from the inundation of waters: their rage was like the violence of mightie riuers and floods, that ouerflowe and drowne all that comes in their way, vers. 54.

Vers. 48. *Mine eye casteth out riuers of water*] Their affliction was so sore, that their case in regard of any earthly succour that could be expected, was helpelesse and remedilesse. In vaine it was to speake vnto men; for they were inexorable, because they were mercileffe: in vaine it was to take weapons; they had had too much of that before, and by that meanes *Zedekiah* had euen vndone them: and as for other helps, they were as farre to seeke as for these. Now therefore they fall to weeping, and seeke to relieue themselves by teares, and by sighes and grones before the Lords throne in heauen. Whence ariseth this doctrine:

That godly sorrow and holy affliction is the best remedie in any sorrow and affliction: whether it be from men, from Sathan, or from God himselfe: whether it be on bodie, on state, on name, or on the minde and soule of a man: whether it bee on particular persons, our selues, or those that are about vs, or on the whole land, on church or commonwealth, this is the most soueraigne remedie in all miseries and extremities whatsoeuer. This inward godly griefe is a salue for euery sore, and a plaister for euery wound. To weepe and cry and powre out our hearts before God is that course that they here take, and that which wee must take in the like distresse: according to the measure of the affliction, and as it is more publike or priuate, so must be the measure of our lamentation. To this there is

*Dott. 1.
Godly sorrow
a soueraigne
remedie.*

*Isaiah. 61.
12. &c.*

is a promise made in the prophesie of *Isaiah*, &c. That when our hands cannot help our selues, nor our tongues preuaile with others, yet then wee may relieue our selues by our prayers vnto God: for in that place the Lord vndertaketh *that mourners shalbe comforted*, &c. God the Father sends his owne sonne, and the Father and the Sonne doe send the holy Ghost, that when men are mourning and feele their pouertie so as it breakes their hearts, the spirit which is the comforter may minister comfort vnto them: that when they feele their captiuitie and imprisonment as it were, Christ Iesus may set them at libertie: be they neuer so weake, neuer so meane, neuer so miserable, neuer so sinfull, if once they come thus to mourne, they shall haue their hearts comforted: though they bee couered with ashes, God will giue them beautie for ashes, *and put on them the garment of gladnes, for the spirit of beautines*: bestowing vpon them that which shall make them cheerefull, *euene the oyle of ioy*: not an earthly but an heauenly oyle.

Reasons.

Joel. 2. 13.

And there is great cause why God should deale so with such kinde of persons: for

1. Hee is full of pitie and compassion: and therefore the prophet *Joel* in his 2. Chap. vers. 13. biddeth vs *rent our hearts and not our garments*: that is, bring in ward sorrow that may crush and breake the heart, and then turne vnto the Lord: which if we doe, wee shalbe sure of reliefe: and why? *the Lord is mercifull* (saith hee) *and our God is very readie to forgine.*

When wee see our children mourning and confessing their faults, wee cannot but haue our bowels of compassion earning towards them.

If *Jacob* had stood by and heard his sonne *Iosephs* pitifull moane that in the anguish of his soule hee made vnto his brethren, when they dealt so vnnaturallie with him, would hee not haue pitied him, and by strong hand haue rescued him from his cruell sonnes? What shall wee then thinke of God? he is farre more mercifull than *Jacob* was, and

and wee are neerer vnto him than euer *Ioseph* was vnto his father? And therefore when wee mourne in a holy manner, certainly *hee will arise and haue mercy vpon vs*. Hee cannot slay, when he sees our hearts full of sorrow, and our eyes full of teares: for the sighs and groanes of his people doe giue him no rest in heauen.

Secondly, this godly mourning must needs be a speciall ² remedie in all manner of afflictions, because it makes our prayers very forcible: it sets an edge vpon our petitions, and makes vs pray heartily, feruently and strongly. When *Jacob* wept in his prayer, it was so effectuell that hee preuailed. When Gods people ioyned together to powre forth *Genesis. 32.* buckets full of teares, drawne from the bottome of their hearts before the Lord, they were marueilously helped: for the great measure of their teares, made their supplications more feruent: and therefore it is said of Christ Iesus himselfe, *that in the dayes of his flesh hee did offer up prayers with strong crying, and teares vnto him that was able to saue him from death.* When our Sauour was about the principal point of his mediatorship, then did he gather strength vnto himselfe by this meanes. ^{1.Sam. 7.6.} ^{Heb. 5.7-}

Thirdly, this must needs be very effectuell, because it is ³ exceeding forcible against sinne: for when sorrow comes into the heart, sinne goes out, it will not lodge there, vnlesse it bee cockered and made much of. When euery one laments his iniquitie, and mournes ouer Christ Iesus whom hee hath pierced by his sinnes; then there is a fountaine opened to wash them from all, euen from sins that made a separation betwixt God and vs. *Zacharie 12. & 13.*

Seeing then that this godly and holy sorrow is a means to make God pitie vs, to make vs call earnestly vpon him, and to expell sinne, which might hinder vs from preuailling with him, it must needs follow that of all remedies in times of distresse, this is the best and surest.

This serues for instruction vnto vs to vse all meanes and furtherances, whereby wee may attaine vnto this. There ^{Vse. 1.} are many afflictions abroad, many neerer home, in our

owne townes and families: nay there are many things amisse in our owne hearts: here is a medicine for euerie one of our maladies: let vs get it and vse it, and all arguments and helps that may continue and increase it: as the *Nineuites*, hauing direction by the spirit of God (as many of them as were his) did when *Jonah* threatned destruction against their citie within fortie dayes; they abased themselves and fell to mourning, and vsed fasting to helpe it onward: the people must shew it in their countenances: the lowing of the beasts, and crying of the infants must further them to this holy remorse and grieve for their great and haynous transgressions. They had grieued the Lord by their iniquities, and therefore now they would grieve themselves with godly contrition for them. Hence it was that Gods people amongst the Iewes vsed to weare sack-cloth, to lie on the ground, and to put dust vpon their heads, which were then meanes to further them in the worke of humiliation.

Therefore now that wee feare danger is neere vs, let vs betake our selues to this holy mourning: if wee refuse to doe it, and still continue to be hard-hearted; if the pestilence come into our families, wee are likelie to be taken away with the first, and to haue not only our bodies, but our soules in danger, and that of Gods wrath and euermolting displeasure.

Therefore let vs seeke to haue our hearts mollified by this excellent meanes of God; and for this end, consider of the blessings of God plentifully powred downe vpon our nation, and vpon our selues in particular: as they did in the day of their humiliation, of whom *Nehemiah* maketh mention.

Nehemi. 9.

Let vs seriously recount how many mercies wee haue enioyed, and how much they haue beene abused: how many afflictions wee haue felt, and how little wee haue beene bettered: how many deliuerances wee haue found, and yet how carelesse, nay how rebellious we haue beene notwithstanding them all.

Let

The first Sermon.

II

Let vs weigh with our selues what hurt our sins haue done vnto vs; how many good thinges they haue turned from vs; and how many euils they haue puld vpon vs: and aboue all, let vs remember what a huge weight and multitude of miseries they haue brought vpon our Sauour: namely, debasement and humiliation: sorrowes and sufferings: assaults and temptations: the heauie burden of our guiltines, and the greuous punishment due for our deserts: the rage and violence of most malicious men, and the wrath and displeasure of the most righteous God: torments of bodie, and terrors of soule, and death it selfe, a painefull death, a shamefull death, and a cursed death.

Secondly, hereby may those bee confuted that thinke *Vse. 2.* it dangerous to meditate on such things as will discomfort them, and bring them to desperation, as they speake: and therefore they would haue no man to tell them of their sinnes: but let them heare of the mercies of God in Christ: that they are likely to escape Gods hand when the pestilence comes neere them, though others escape not, but bee swept away on euery side of them, beeing notwithstanding as good or better than themselues. Farre bee it from vs that any here present should haue such thoughts, or giue such care to such carnall counsell.

There is no danger in Christian sorrow, but the more of it, the better. And therefore the Apostle *Iames* saith: *Suffer affliction, or afflict your selues, and sorrow and weepe: Iam. 4.7.* and if any thing keepe you from mourning, away with it: *let goe laughter, and let carnall mirth be turned into mourning, and your ioy into heauinesse:* O then you cannot cast downe your selues so lowe, but God will raise you vp againe.

Obiect. Oh but to weepe and lament, it is not manhood: *Obiection.* it argues that men want courage and fortitude, and is altogether vnbecoming the person of a man: they will trust in God (they say) and neuer mourne for the matter.

Doth it argue want of courage to lament? Nay it argues want of faith not to lament for sinne. What doe *Solution.*

*Hosea. 12.
3-4.*

they thinke of *Iacob*, was he a coward? They cannot say so: for the holy Ghost giues him that commendation, that he had strength and courage not onely to preuaile against men, but with the Angell of the couenant. And what was his conflict? *Hee wept and prayed*, as the Prophet *Hosea* witnesseth. Was this cowardlines? Nothing lesse: for the scripture commends it for notable strength.

*Psal. 6.
Psal. 19.*

And further, what doe they thinke of *Dauid*? was hee a coward? they will not so disgrace that renowned king, and worthy captaine of the Lords host, as to lay vpon him the imputation of cowardise: yet hee makes mention of his teares and that often: as in the Psalmes, where he saith, *that hee watered his couch with teares: that his eyes did gush forth with riuers of teares because men kept not Gods lawe: and such like.*

Zacharie. 12

And what will they say to all Gods people, of whom it is said, that they *should mourne as they did for Iosiah in the valley of Isadadrinmon*, where hee was slaine, whose death all Israell did bitterly bewaile? and as one *mourneth for his first borne*, the only heire and hope of the familie. What will they answere to this? will they condemne all Gods people for a generation of cowards? Nay, this is so farre from bewraying want of fortitude, that wee may boldly say, that when men are fullest of such teares, they are fullest of fortitude.

Heb. 5.

For what shall wee thinke of the Lord Iesus Christ? had hee no heart? was hee destitute of courage? that could not possibly bee. Nay, when hee was to exercise the fulnesse of his power: to vndertake such a worke as no creature durst attempt: when hee was to offer vp himselfe to his father as a sacrifice for the sinnes of the Elect: when hee was to encounter the Lords wrath and his iustice, Sathan and death, hell and damnation, and all the power of darkenes, that same time hee wept and that abundantly. And I hope none will say that then our Sauours strength failed him, notwithstanding his bitter teares and cries.

In trueth those that doe not weepe when there is cause, they

they are without heart, and vtterly voide of true fortitude: subiect to marueilous feares and violent distempers, (which arise from a base minde) for what is the reason they are so affraide of death? but because they haue not mourned for their sinnes, and so remoued the sting of death? which if they had done, they would triumph ouer death, and say with S. Paul, 1. Cor. 15. *O Death where is thy sting?* their hearts would then stand fast as the strong mountaines, and not bee affraide of any ill tidings: No not *of the pestilence that walketh in the darke, nor of the plague that destroyeth at noone day.* *Psal. 112. Psal. 91.6.*

3 Thirdly this makes exceedingly for the comfort of those that are mourners in Sion: they are in fauor with God, and out of the reach of al danger, so that nothing can befall them for hurt. *Blessed are those that mourne, for they shall bee comforted:* more happie is the poore man that weepes for his sinne, than the greatest potentate that reioyceth in the flesh. *Vse 3. Math. 5.*

Vers. 18. *For the destruction of the daughter of my people.* Here is the cause of their lamentation: it was the ruines and calamities of Gods Church, and poore distressed seruants: whence this doctrine may be gathered.

That the greatest affliction that shoulde touch the hearts of Gods people, is the affliction of the Church: as is euident out of this text: For when Gods inheritance was spoiled, some put to the sword, others led captiue, the temple of God razed, and the exercises of religion abolished, this made them to grieue exceedingly: this was it that wrought vpon *Jeremie*, and made him breake forth into those wishes, *Oh that mine head were full of water, and that mine eyes were a fountaine of teares, that I might weepe day and night for the slaine of the daughter of my people.* As if hee could not haue his fill, nor weepe enough for the desolations of Sion, and the miserable ouerthrow thereof which he foresawe. *Doct. 2. What afflictions doe go neere the hearts of the Saints. Jeremy 9. 1.*

This was it that went neere the heart of good *Nebem- ab:* who beeing in great prosperitie, cup-bearer to the mightiest *Nebem. 1. 4. & 2. 1. 2.*

mightiest Monarch that was then in the world, and in speciall fauour with him: yet for the affliction and reproch wherein the Church of God was, hee conceiued such inward sorrow, that he was sad in the kings presence: which yet was a thing that he must and would haue forborne, if possibly hee could. *Moses* goes further: hee does not onely mourne, but is content to lay downe his prosperitie, and to expose his estate to a manifest ouerthrow, so that hee might helpe forward the deliuerance of the afflicted Israelites, and saue them from the hands of their oppressors: For he knew he could not be in fauor with *Pharaoh*, if he should ioyn with them, whom hee so cruelly handled: but *hee chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to be called the sonne of Pharaohs daughter.* *Hester* seemes to goe somewhat beyond him: for she resolues with her selfe for the cause of the Iewes (who were then all destinated to slaughter) to aduenture her life in going to the king in their behalfe: *I will goe* (saith shee) *though it be contrarie to the Law, and if I die, I die.*

But our Lord Iesus Christ goes beyond them all: for when hee was in supreme excellencie, hee was so affected with the wofull case of his Elect, into which they had brought themselues by their owne rebellions against him, that *hee humbled himselfe, and tooke on him the state of a servant*; and submitted himselfe to many sorrowes, disgraces, and sufferings not onely while hee liued, but principally when hee dyed (as hath beene before in part declared) that so he might deliuer his people from the wrath to come, and from eternall death, which they had deserued, and must haue els indured.

Reasons
1.

And there is great reason why the affliction of the Church should so affect vs: and that first in regard of the communion that is betwixt God and them: for they are called the Lords flocke, his chiefe treasure vnder heauen, his first borne, yea the very apple of his eye: and therefore being so deere vnto the Lord, they should be deere vnto vs, and we should haue a tender care of them and
mourne

mourne in our hearts for any euill that befalls them : as *Jeremie* did, chap. 30. that the Lords flocke should goe into captiuitie.

Secondly, we should be thus affected in regard of the communion that is betweene them and vs: for they are our members, yea neerer vnto vs then our bodilie members : and wee should haue greater care of the whole Church, than of our selues, because it more concernes Gods glorie. Howbeit indeede in caring for them, wee care for our selues too: labouring to preuent their afflictions, wee preuent our owne, and weeping for others miseries, we get armor that will keepe off miserie from our selues.

And that there is no danger in dealing for the seruants of God, may appeare in *Exodus*. One would haue thought there had beene some great euill neere *Moses* and *Aaron*, when they must fetch out of Egypt such a people from such a King: not onely by petition, but by command, and threatning if hee would not yeeld: wee would haue imagined that Pharaoh, a proud man, would neuer haue indured this at their handes; and yet wee see they were in perill, but of all others most safe.

3 Thirdly, the affliction of the church must needs work most vpon the hearts of Gods chosen, because of the insultations and triumphs of the wicked against them, when they cry out, *where is now there God?* And that was it that *Moses* did vrge to moue God to spare his people, when he threatned to destroy them for their Idolatry, he intreats God to remember his great name and to spare them, lest the Egyptians should say that hee had brought them out maliciously to slay them in the mountaines, and to consume them from the earth: or that hee was not able to bring them into the land of Canaan. This is it that goes to the heart of the faithfull, when they heare profane persons reuiling the hoast of the liuing God. Oh these are your professors (say they) these are they which runne with their bibles to sermons, these are they that were wont to brag that prayer would preuent or remoue Gods iudgements : doe you not

Exod. 32. 1
Numbers.
1416.

not see that they are swept away by the pestilence as well as others? that they were pinched with pouertie and necessitie as well as others? that these and the like despitefull and bitter speeches and taunts, doe wound the verie hearts of such as loue Gods glory, and desire the prosperitie of his Saints, and so cause them much to bewaile the tribulation of the Church.

Use. I.

Amos. 6. 6.

Here are to be reprov'd all carelesse persons, who, so it goe well with themselves, regard not the Church at all: let it sinke or swimme, all is one to them. So they may bee free from the contagion, and sitte quiet in their houses, whatsoeuer becomes of their neighbours, it skills not: *They drinke wine in bowles*, and giue themselves to all excesse, but *no man is sorie for the affliction of Ioseph.*

Isa. 22. 12.

13. 14.

This is a great fault in these daies, now many Christians are taken away, and the sword of the Lord is stretched out still, and many are smitten downe on euery side; yet there is as much feasting and sporting and frequenting of wakes, and that on the Lords sabboth, as if all thinges went well with vs. Which argues strange infidelitie, and is such a sinne as the Lord will pursue euen vnto death, if it bee not reformed: as the Prophet *Isaiah* threatneth. *In that day (saith he) did the Lord of hostes call vnto weeping and mourning, and to baldnesse, and girding with sackcloth, and beholde, ioy and gladnesse, slaying Oxen, and killing sheepe, eating flesh and drinking wine, eating and drinking for to morrow we shall dye: and it was declared in the eares of the Lord of hostes.* And what followes therevpon? *Surely this iniquitie shall not bee purged from you till yee die, saith the Lord God of hostes.*

Which being so, it stands Magistrates vpon, to vse their authoritie for the redresse of such things, as are so dangerous to the whole state of the land.

But there is yet another greater fault amongst vs than this that hath beene named. For many do not only walke securely in the affliction of their brethren, but desire the continuance and increase of it, in hope that they shall enlarge their possessions, and better their estate by meanes there-

thereof: as if scarcitie of people did bring abundance of riches, whereas in trueth it is quite contrarie. But howsoeuer, those that haue but a glimpse of Christianitie in them, would rather haue the societie of others, than liue alone in the midst of the earth.

3 There is yet a third and worser sort than the former, which come iustly vnder this reproofe: Such I meane as long for sturs and mutinies and insurrections. Poore men (say they) can get nothing, but some fewe great ones carry away all, and so they grow to murmuring and repining, & multiply speeches of discontentment: grieving and lamenting that at the taking away of the former Prince all things should bee so quiet and peaceable. Downe (say they) with these Magistrates and with these Preachers, this too much plentie yeelds vs nothing, and therefore they could also bee glad of vnseasonable weather, that through scarcitie of things there might arise some tumults, and so they might get prouision from such as fall into their hands. These haue bloody hearts.

4 Yet others there are that are worse than these, who doe not onely wish for such troubles on the Church and Common-wealth before they come, but reioyce at them when they are come: And when others eyes are full of teares, their mouths are full of laughter; as *Jeremie* chargeth the Moabites: *Hee magnified himselfe against the Lord: Jeremie 48. Moab shall wallow in his vomit, and hee also shalbe in derision: 26.27.*

For diddest thou not deride Israell as if hee had bene found among theeues? For when thou speakest of him, thou art moued. This was their manner of dealing, and this is the proper tie of all such wicked Moabites: they cannot speake of the calamities of the faithfull, but they are wonderfully affected with ioy, so that they cannot sit still in their places, they are so moued with mirth and laughter. These haue cruell hearts, and shalbe met withall accordingly as Moab was.

5 But especially are those here to be condemned that doe not onely reioyce at the troubles, but at the sinnes of those that are religiously affected: if they slippe through

infirmities, and fall into any sinne: if they bee ouergone with worldlines (which is greatly to be taken heede of) if they be lifted vp with pride, and manifest the same by violence of words, or actions, or be stained with any the like vices, presently they exclaime against them and take on beyond measure: Wot you what? (say they) the great professor hath spoken or done this or that: and so they are as glad together, as if they had gotten a kingdome, and came home in triumph.

Herein they shew themselves to bee right Satans, who takes pleasure in nothing so much as in sinne.

6 And yet there is one higher degree of sinne, contrarie to the practise of these holy ones; which is, when men are so farre from grieuing that it goes ill with Gods seruants, that if they be somewhat amisse, they will make them worse, and help forward their misery, and for that end misinforme and incense such against them, as they know will inflict punishments vpon them. These are inspired by the spirit of Satan, as those who are mentioned in this text are inspired by the spirit of God.

Use 2.

2 This is for great comfort vnto them that can mourne for the calamities of the church. This is a notable testimonie that they are feeling members, and haue in them the life of christianitie, when others troubles are theirs, others losses theirs, others reproches theirs, and any distresses and straites of others are made theirs.

Isa. 66. 10.

They that lament for Sion, shalbe comforted with Sion. God hath promised them singular consolation; it is their portion, and they may confidently expect it.

Vers. 49. *Mine eye droppeth without stay.* From which words this doctrine may bee gathered.

Doff. 3.

*How long
humiliation
must be con-
tinued.*

That wee must neuer cease our humiliation, till God giue consolation. When the Lord ministreth vnto vs occasion of griefe, wee should neuer surcease, vntill he reuiue our hearts. We must not begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh: but hauing a good entrance, wee must goe on with our worke and bring it to perfection: and if God giue vs a heart

heart to mourne, set to it and neuer giue ouer, till hee set vs free. So they are exhorted in an other chapter of this booke, *Let teares runne downe like a riuer day and night, take thee no rest, neither let the tapple of thine eye cease; arise, cry in the night, powre out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord, &c.* And iust it is, that we should neuer make an ende of mourning, till God make an ende of afflicting: accordng to their example who are mentioned in *Nehe- miah, that wept at the hearing of the Law, till they were bid to reioyce.* It was a notable commendation of that people, that they would not leaue off, till they had warrant to leaue off. So *Mordecai* when *Queene Hester* sent him garments, to cloath him, and would haue had his sackcloth to be taken from him, hee would not receiue them, but humbled himselfe so long, till hee was assured of deliuerance.

So *Jacob* would neuer let goe his holde, but stil wrestles with the Angell, and continues weeping, and praying, till hee obtained a blessing: so the woman of Canaan stickes close to it, and is importunate with Christ for her daughter, and would neuer desist, nor let her suite fall, till shee had preuailed with our Sauour.

And there are reasons, why wee must neuer breake off, but still continue our humiliation, and seruencie, till God shew by good effect that he hath mercifully respected vs, and our supplications.

1 For first, what is the ground of true humiliation? Is it not sinceritie? Now wheresoeuer there is sinceritie, there is faith, and faith will neuer make an ende till it conquer, it neuer giues the onser, but it obtaines the victorie. For it hath to deale with God, and hee neuer bids it make an ende; (vnlesse it be by way of triall, as hee dealt with *Jacob* and with the woman of Canaan) till it haue gotten the desired successe.

2 A second reason may be, that Gods children haue hope as well as faith; now hope neuer makes ashamed: because it is neuer disappointed of the thing hoped for.

3 Thirdly, they haue loue, which makes vp a threefolde

corde, euery twist whereof is stronger, than all the cords of the world: *for loue is strong as death, &c, the coales thereof are fierie coales, and a vehement flame. Much water cannot quench loue, neither can the floods drowne it, &c.*

In regard of all these it is impossible that those that soundly begin the worke of humiliation should bee put backe, vntill they haue obtained their purpose. Which may be further seene in the spouse, *Canticles 3.* who neuer gives ouer seeking till *shee had found him whom her soule loued.*

Pse. 1.

1 This therefore is to encourage men to godly constancie, and importunitie, when any distresse lies vpon the people of God. If they be earnest for their deliuerance, they shall not misse of their marke: *but those that sowe in teares, shall reape in ioy*, in the due time of the Lord. Whether they bee suters for the church, or commonwealth, or for themselves, in regard of crosses on their bodies, anguishes in their soules, or afflictions in their estate, the Lord will looke downe from his holy place in heauen vpon them, and heare and helpe them at length, if they perseuere without fainting. This is liuely and notably expressed vnto vs in the parable of the vnrighteous Iudge, *Luk. 18. 12.* *Who though hee feared not God, nor reuerenced man, yet heard the poore widow, and in the end, did her right against her aduersarie, because of her importunitie.* Oh then what shall wee thinke of God? will a man, will a wicked man, will a mercilesse man bee moued by importunitie; and will not God, will not the gracious God, will not the God that is full of compassion be moued to auenge his seruants, and to minister iustice vnto them? *I tell you* (saith Christ) *I that am the wisdom of the Father, and know all things, euen I tell you,* that he will do it: *He will auenge them, and that quickly.* It is as possible that God should bee without ease, as that they should be without helpe.

Pse. 2.

2 Secondly, they come iustly here to be reprov'd, that will set vpon Gods seruices only by fits and starts. If they haue not present helpe from God, they will seeke vnto the would

world, and vnto Satan, and to carnall meanes. If they cannot mend their estate by prayer, they will patch it vp by odde shifts: if their hearts haue not present comfort from Gods spirit, they will seeke comfort from iesters and leaud companions.

Commonly such people grow of all other most bitter against those holy exercises which they haue profaned, and therefore could haue no benefit by them. Such were they of whom the Prophet *Isaiab* speaketh, who are so impudent and shamelesse, that they dare expostulate the matter with God himselfe: *VVherefore haue wee fasted?* (say they) *wee haue punished our selues, and thou regardest it not.* See what bragges they make of their seruices, they that doe least and worst, commonly brag most. But what saies the Prophet? *Behold in the day of your fast, yee will seeke your owne Will, and require all your debts.* 4. *Beholde yee fast to strife and debate, &c.* 5. *Is it such a fast that I haue chosen, that a man should afflict his soule for a day, and bow downe his head like a bull-rush?* &c. Thus wee see what reckoning God makes of their fasting, what account so euer they themselves make of it: and yet if they faile of their expectation, they will quarrell with the Ministers of God, with the word of God, and with God himselfe; because vsing such exercises carnally, they receiued no benefit by them.

3 This must be an instruction vnto vs; whē we are to deale with those that are afflicted in their soules, that we handle the matter warilie and circumspectly, when their hearts are wrought vpon; we should not help them too soone out of their sorrow, but exhort them to waite for comfort frō heauen: for all cannot be presently well with the soule: and therefore it is good wisdom to aduise such still to hold on their course. Haue they begun to examine their hearts? let them risle yet further into them. Haue they begunne to dislike their sinnes; and themselves for their sinnes? let them get a more thorow detestation, and holy indignation against them.

Act. 2. 37.
38.

It is not good for one that takes physicke to giue vp the potion forthwith, as soone as it begins to worke. *Peter* as a wise physition gaue other countell to his hearers that began to bee moued by his doctrine. They had beene mockers, and scoffers: they had crucified the Lord of life, and so exceedingly endangered their owne soules: wherewith being charged by *Peter*, and being pricked and stung in their hearts and consciences, they aske the Apostles; *Mess and brethren, what shall wee doe?* He doth not tell them, as some vnskillfull Ministers would, your case is good: bee not discomfited, my soule for yours, you shall doe well; but hee bids them amend their liues: repent, and get sound and heartie sorrow for their sinnes, that so being thoroughly humbled, they might afterwards bee soundly comforted.

Doct. 4.
The eye
must affect
the heart.

Mark. 6. 34.

Vers. 51. *Mine eye breaketh mine heart.*] The meaning of which words is, that his heart was marueilously moued with the things that his eye did behold. Whence this doctrine offreth it selfe for our learning: That good men must vse their eyes to stirre vp their hearts to pitie and compassion, that so they may be pierced with griefe, and sorrow. This wee haue proued vnto vs in the example of Christ Iesus, the most absolute paterne of all holinesse: For it is said of him by the *Euangelist Marke*, *That when he lifted up his eyes, and sawe the multitude*, which had no faithfull Ministers to instruct them, *his very bowels were moued with commiseration towards them, because they were as sheepe without a shepherd.*

Pro. 22. 9.

In this regard it is that *Salomon* describing a good man: calls him *a man of a good eye*: and saies of such an one: *That hee will bestow his bread vpon the poore*, hee seeth the faces of some pale, and of others blacke, by reason of long want and forbearance of foode: Others hee beholdeth naked and colde, and exposed to the iniurie of the ayre; and of all sorts of vnseasonable weather. Now hauing a good eye hee will not onely take a view of them, but bee inwardly affected with the sight of them, and from a tender and pitifull

pitifull heart minifter reliefe vnto them.

Hence was it, that *Moses* did not content himselfe to know of the miseries of his poore brethren, the Israelites by heare-say, but hee would goe out to see their burdens, and how they spent their paines and their strength, and after all, were recompenced with stripes from their task-masters: which did so worke vpon him, that it made him stretch forth his hand to auenge some of them. So likewise in the Gospell of *Matthew*, it is set downe as the propertie of all holy and religious persons, *that they will goe to the prison to see, and to the house to visit* the distressed members of Christ, and take all occasions, to bring their owne hearts to pitie their poore brethren: and will euen compell their inward parts, to beare a burden with them, that they may bee more helpfull vnto them.

Which makes greatly for the reproofe of those whose eyes and eares are as filthy sinkes to conuey all vncleanesse into them, *who haue eyes full of adulterie*, that they cannot looke about them, but they are stirred vp to beastly and vile lusts. Who haue eyes full of enuie, that they cannot beholde their brethren, that are equall vnto them, or goe before them, or come neere vnto them; but presently they fret against them, and others welfare is their woe and miserie. Others haue a *wicked eye*, that they cannot looke vpon their neighbors cattle, houses, possessions, and the like; but forthwith their hearts are poisoned with a couetous desire of them, and then they cast about how they may make them theirs; and if they cannot, they eate vp their hearts with discontentment, as *Ahab* did. Agreeable to this, is the place of *Salomon*, where hee saith; *A man of a wicked eye, lusteth after riches*; but hee shews there, that God meetes with him: for hee shalbe so farre from getting more, that hee shall not keepe that which hee hath: but the more he runnes after riches, the faster pouertie shall pursue him.

Another kinde of ill eye, is a niggardly eye, spoken of by

Act. 7. 23.
Exod. 2. 11.

Mat. 25. 36.

Use 1.

1. An adulterous eye.

2. An enuious eye.

3. A couetous eye.

Pro. 28. 22.

4 A niggardly eye.

Pro. 23.6.

by the wise man in the *Proverbs*; where hee giueth this counsell: *Eate not the bread of him that hath an euill eye, &c.* that thinkes all lost that goes from him, and all taken out of his stomacke, that goes into other mens bowels: hee will giue men a welcome for fashion sake, but all that eate of his meate, are a vexation vnto him; and these thoughts runne in his head while men sitte at his table: This cost I might haue spared: this would haue serued my familie all the weeke: I had rather haue their roome than their companie, that thus trouble and charge me. And so his heart is euer full of discontentednesse: Thus it is apparant, that many haue their hearts sinfullie affected, by meanes of their eye; as Gods children haue them holily affected.

Verf. 52. *Mine enemies chased me sore.*] By these similitudes here vsed, it appears how fierce they were; and yet all was without cause, as the text witnesseth. Indeepe, God saw in them matter that deserued correction, and affliction; but their aduersaries had no occasion offered, why they should behaue themselues so cruellie towards them.

Doct. 5.

The innocent
molested.Psal. 35. 12.
13. &c.

Psal. 11. 3.

Luk. 23. 2.

From which this doctrine may be collected; That the more harmelesse men be, the more they shalbe molested. This wee see in *Dauid*: hee prayed and fasted, and mourned for his enemies; and yet they sought his woe and ruine. Therefore hee saith in one Psalm, *the foundations must bee cast downe, and what hath the righteous done?* there was great preparation, and there must bee sore and mortall warres; they would sweepe all away, and not leaue a good man in the land: but, *what hath the righteous done?* There must bee a great execution; but where is the conuiction: that is iust nothing? So they cryed against Christ; *Away with him, away with him; crucifie him, crucifie him, &c.* But what euill hath he done? (saies Pilate) Oh Pilate must know, that men so iust as they were, would neuer haue deliuered him into his hands, except hee had beene a notorious offender; whereas indeede, *hee was a lambe without spot*, and none iniquitie was found with him. Agreeable to this is the saying of *Dauid*;

David, the wicked gnasheth his teeth against the righteous. The *Psal. 37. 12*
more innocent and iust any one is, the more hee shal be
maligned and pursued. And this stands with reason:

1 Because wicked men haue a quarrell against Gods *1. Reason.*
image in the innocent, as Satan their captaine hath, and
therefore will they be bitter against them.

This may be seene in *Jeremie*, hee had done them no *Jer. 15. 10.*
wrong, but brought vnto them the ministerie of saluati-
on; and yet euery one curseth him, and cryeth out against
him; and why? because God at that time shewed himselfe
more cleerely in *Jeremie*, than in any other. The like vio- *Act. 7.*
lence they shewed against *Stenen* and *Paul*, casting dust *Act. 22. 2.*
into the ayre, and crying out vpon them; that one would
thinke them brutish creatures. And why were they so full
of rage against them, but because they were full of grace,
and dealt faithfully in the worke that they were set about?
because they did helpe to raise vp the kingdome of Iesus
Christ, and to race the kingdome of Satan more than o-
thers? But for Iesus Christ, *who was the ingrauen image of his*
father, they had a greater quarrell against him, than euer
they had against any. *Young Bulls of Basan*, such as were *Psal. 22.*
full of might and malice: *Dogs and Lions*, such as were
full of rage and furie, did all beset and compasse him about;
their madnes was neuer so great against any as against
him, because none was euer so good as hee.

2 An other reason may be, because there is a contrarie-
tie betwixt the good and euill: though they be of the same
countrie, of the same towne, of the same familie, yea of
the same parents, yet are they not of the same world. For
so saith our Sauour Christ to his disciples; *ye are not of* *Iohn. 15. 19*
this world; &c.

Esaue and *Iacob* had the same parents, and were both to-
gether in the same wombe; and yet they contend one
with another. *Rebecah* their mother would faine know
the cause of it; the Lord tells her the cause. *Two nations* *Ge. 25. 22.*
are in thy wombe; and two manner of people shal bee diuided *23.*
out of thy bowels; &c: The one the seede of the serpent, the

other the seede of the woman. There is not so great enmity betweene a man and an adder, as there is betweene the righteous and the wicked: and therefore no faultfinder nor hunter: no hawke nor hound are more desirous and greedie of the pray and game, than the outrageous enemies of the church are of the destruction of Gods servants; because they are possessed with the spirit of Satan, and violently ouercaried with hellish fiercenesse.

3 Thirdly, the carriage of Gods children doth disgrace them, and therefore they maligned them: *because they ran not to the same excesse of ryot with them, therefore speake they euill of them.* For impious persons reason thus: They goe to Gods house, I goe to the Ale-house: They carrie themselves soberly, I carry my selfe intemperately: They are esteemed, I am contemned: I know they like not of mee, as I doe not of them, and therefore what mischief I can doe them, they shalbe sure of it.

Use 1.

This point ministreth vnto vs, matter of instruction: that whosoever would walke in a godly course, should looke for troubles, and that sundry waies: yea and to haue his very life stricke at by such as are enemies to the Gospell of Christ: or if they cannot take away that, let him be sure his name shall pay for it, and be iniuriously and shamefully traduced. Whosoever resolues to *live godly in Christ Iesus, must looke for persecution.* It is impossible that there should be so many fowlers and hunters, and not labor to catch somewhat.

Indeede they wilbee fauourable enough to grosse adulterers, theeves, and other malefactors; and if any be more forward to punish and redresse such; Oh it is great crueltie: they deale hardly and seuerely: they would bee very loath that breed should be taken away.

But if they be religious persons that are to bee punished, no torture is too great, no death too grievous for them; therefore let those that are christians looke to it: they shall haue great men against them, as *Dauid* had princes: They shall haue meane men against them, as he had drunkards on the ale-house bench to make songs of him: There they

they will vtter their merchandise, false tales and vile reports.

Those that are further off wilbee against them, those that are neighbours, nay some that are of their owne familie wilbee against them: no bands of ciuilitie, no bands of kindnes, no bands of nature will hold, where the bands of Christianitie are wanting.

But if the case be so (will some say) were it not better to let religion alone, that one may keepe himselfe quiet with out such disturbance? *Obiection.*

Nay, that will not bee a sufficient reason, nor a warrantable excuse: neither neede any bee so farre discouraged: For as Christ saith; *in the world yee shall haue trouble*: So he promiseth, that in him wee shall haue peace and comfort: if there were a thousand worlds, and all against one of vs, yet one comfort of Christ is able to counteruaile all their oppositions. *Answer.*

If God giue vs assurance of a better life, what great matter is it if they deprive vs of this life? If wee see the Angels and Saints, and Christ Iesus, and the whole Trinitie to bee with vs; what perill is it, if all leaud base sinfull men bee against vs? If God promise to make our names and persons glorious, what neede wee feare though they seeke to make vs ignominious? *Not one haire of our head can fall without Gods providence*: Wee are not in their power, though we be in their hands. *Joh. 16.33.*

They may proceede so farre as to arraigne vs, conuict vs, and condemne vs; and yet (except God will) they shall not execute vs: though our naturall brethren and sisters and friends forsake vs, God will giue vs new brethren and sisters and friends, that shalbee more kind and faithfull vn-to vs, than euer they were.

But if men for feare of difficulties and dangers, will not aduenture vpon religion, are they sure to keepe themselues from troubles by that meanes? Nay, if a man will not suffer for a good cause; God can and will make him suffer for an ill cause. *Achitophel* would leaue *Dauid*, and take the

stronger side, though the worser side: but was not that to his destruction? So *Iudas*, hee would turne from Christ to the Pharises: but did that bring him any peace? No, it tended to his vtter confusion.

Vse 2.

This teacheth vs another lesson, that when we see men so hunted and pursued, wee doe not condemne them presently and say, Surely these are bad fellows: for otherwise they would neuer be so much maligned nor molested. But what shall wee thinke of Gods people here that were hunted and chased, and that for their liues; shall wee say that these were the worst in the world? Nay rather, if we would conclude any thing, let it be this: These men are enuied and wronged, and wee see no euident cause why it should bee so; therefore it is likeli they are good men and deale faithfullie.

Vers. 54. *Then thought I, I am destroyed.*] This was the case not onely of *Ieremie*, but of the rest of Gods seruants in captiuitie, they were euen past hope for any recouerie.

Doct. 6.
Outward
afflictions
vsually, ac-
compained
with inward
temptations.

The doctrine that here may bee gathered is: That when troubles arise against our bodies and states, Satan labors to breed troubles in our soules: when there are fightings without, vsuallie there are terrors within. This is manifest in the Chapter that wee haue now in hand, vers. 17. 18. *When they were farre from peace and prosperitie, then they conclude; their strength and hope is perished from the Lord.* Hee had made them many gracious promises (they could not deny) but now they neuer expected the performance of them: all their hope was gone.

Iob. 3. 3. &c
Ier. 15. 10.

And this we see that Gods children haue still beene exercised with great terrors and feares within, when they haue beene set vpon by grieuous trials without: the trueth whereof we see in *Iob* and in *Ieremie*, the violence of whose inward conflicts, made them to breake forth into marueilous great distempers.

Reason.

And this stands with reason: for in those times Satan will be readie to perswade them.

If God loued you, hee would neuer let you bee in this estate:

estate: as he dealt with our Sauour; *If thou bee the Sonne of God, command that these stones be made bread.* As if he should haue said: Is this the God you haue serued all this while? See how hee deales with you now: You are certainly forsaken: if you will eate stones you may: other prouision he makes none for you; and is it likelie then that you are the sonne of God? If you thinke you are so still, trust no more in him, but provide for your selfe, and command that these stones bee made bread, that so you may haue reliefe that way.

Since the case stands thus, let vs in time of prosperitie, arme our selues with strong reasons, whereby we may assure our hearts that the Lord is our God: and this will appeare to be no more than needefull, if we consider how Gods dearest seruants haue beene, and are put to it; and though they haue had a good measure of confidence, yet their grounds haue beene shaken, and they themselues much perplexed: *God hath turned away his face from them, and they haue beene troubled.* Since (I say) the case stands thus, let vs get good euidence for our happie estate in Christ, and for our interest vnto eternall life. Let vs haue our hearts seasoned with true pietie; with the loue of Gods word; with the feare of his name; with zeale for his glorie, and the like vertues and graces of Gods holy spirit: and that before distresses come, that so in the euill day we may haue good assurance, of Gods vnvaluable and vnchangeable fauor in his sonne.

For if wee be slacke and negligent herein, and onelie hope well, and trust that God wil bee mercifull vnto vs, and accept of vs for his children, then when Satan, and affliction, and our flesh ioine together, and make an assault against vs, our hope will proue but a broken reede: wee shalbe tossed with euerie waue; yea sore perplexed and vterlie ouerwhelmed in the gulfes of distresse, if not of despair it selfe.

Therefore let men make sure worke before hand, especially before death approach. For otherwise the diuell will

tell them; that then it is too late to set vpon matters of godlines, as hee euer perswaded them before that it was too soone: then will hee bring before them all former reckonings, and charge vpon them the iniquities of their youth; and if their grounds be not very good, their hearts will vtterly faile them, and then they are vndone for euer.

For if the Church of God make this wofull complaint, *that their hope and strength were perished from the Lord:* how shall wicked vnregenerate persons be able to stand, when God shall come against them?

Not with matters of temptation (as he doth against his children) but with matters of truth; not of mercie, but in iudgement; not that the diuell makes them beleue so, but that indeede it is so. When God shall once begin to draw out his sword against them, where will they bee then? If Gods children doe feele such a heauie burden of it, doe not you thinke it will presse them downe to the gates of hell? When no friend shall stand by them, no shifts and inuentions of wit shalbee available for them: when all mirth will be vncomfortable, and euerie thing frowne and looke heauily vpon them: God, and Satan, and sinne, and their owne consciences, beeing all vp in armes against them. When this (I say) comes vpon them, (as come it will sooner or later) which way can they turne them? and how can they shift off that heauie load of Gods wrath and indignation, which will lie as a mountaine vpon their guiltie soules? though they haue beene full of boasting in the daies of their iolitie, and haue vaunted what a notable faith they haue, yet (as *Zephania* saith) in that day the strong man shall cry bitterly.

Zeph. I. 14.

Howsoeuer they imagine to put off these things, yet let them know that their strength wilbe found too weake, and their skill too small, to ward off the Lords blowes.

The thiefe that hath courage enough to rob and steale vpon the high-waies side, yet hath hee little enough when his poore executioner is to deale with him: euen so shall
it

it bee with all wicked and proud men, when the time of their execution doth approach: their hearts shall faile them for the things that shall come vpon them, and continue vpon them for euermore.

2 Secondly, this doctrine offereth vnto the godly matter of great consolation: albeir their case many times seeme vncomfortable, yet they must not iudge according to that which they see: for God many times laies such afflictions vpon them, that their case is thought both by themselues and others to be desperate and vnrecoverable, and yet indeede it is happie and blessed. As it fared with *Paul*, who had the sentence of death past vpon him, and died dailie almost; so that when hee went out in the morning, hee was in danger to be slaine ere he returned home againe: and yet God did vphold him, and made him hereby more confidently and comfortably to rest and relie vpon him. Use 2.
2. Cor. 4. 11.

So the good Prophets wife thought all help was gone: her husband was gone, her goods gone, her labor gone, her children like to be gone, and she had no meanes in the world to relieue her selfe; yet euen then when she was almost past hope, God provided a competent estate for her. So *Hezekiah* concludes that hee was gone, he should neuer goe to the temple any more: neuer see man more among the inhabitants of the world: his webbe was cut off, &c. with many speeches to this effect: and yet wee reade how God restored him againe, and prolonged his life for many yeares. 2. Kings 4.
1. &c.
Isa. 38. 10.

Say then that one haue great discomforts in his soule; great breaches in his estate; grienous and dangerous sickness vpon his body, &c. yet here is his comfort, that God that raised vp others, can and will in due time raise vp him.

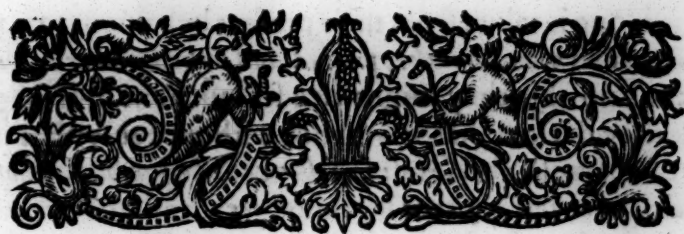
Oh but my faith faileth me, and is it not said, according *Obiect.*
to your faith it shalbe vnto you?

True, if you haue no faith, you can looke for no mercie: but if you haue any faith at all, it shalbe with you according therevnto; but how farre beyond it, God tels you. Answer.

you not, for hee doth for vs many times *aboue that, that wee can aske or thinke.*

But you imagine you haue no more faith, than you haue feeling, whereas it is farre otherwise: there may be much faith, and little feeling: faith may be strong, and yet strongly assaulted: comfort may be departed, and yet not vtterly lost: wee may feare wee are cut off, and yet not perish: for Gods strength and perfection, is seene in our weaknesse and imperfection: though wee cannot belecue, yet God is still faithfull: though children will not credit their parents, yet they will relieue their necessities, and so will God ours; albeit through weakenes of faith, wee cannot so fullie apprehend and apply his promises to our selues: He sees it is not maliciousnesse nor grosse infidelitie in vs; and therefore he will pitie vs, and beare with vs, rather than in seueritie proceede against vs.

FINIS.



THE SECOND SERMON.

Lamentations, chap. 3. vers. 55. &c.

55 I called vpon thy name O Lord, out of the low dungeon.

56 Thou hast heard my voice : stoppe not thine eare from my sigh and from my crie.

57 Thou drewest neere in the day that I called vpon thee: thou saidst; Feare not.

58 O Lord thou hast maintained the cause of my soule, and hast redeemed my life.

59 O Lord, thou hast seen my wrong : iudge thou my cause.

60 Thou hast scene all their vengeance, and all their deuises against me.

61 Thou hast heard their reproach, O Lord, and all their imaginations against me.



Ye heard in the words immediatly going before, the wofull distresse that the children of God were driuen vnto: how they were cast into the dungeon, and stript of all outward and inward comforts.

The connexion.

Now here he shewes what remedie they vsed: they cast their burden vpon the Lord, and hoped for succour at his hands: and the reasons that moue them so to doe, are set downe in the text to be two.

E

1 First,

The diuision
and mea-
ning of the
words.

First, one is taken from their present behaviour towards God; which was, *that they prayed, and sighed, and cryed*, vers. 55. 56. And that they might bee so much the more regarded, they declare that it was not without cause, that they were so earnest with God: for *they called vpon him out of the low dungeon*: vers. 55. that is, out of great and grieuous affliction. And yet further mischiefe was intended, and their aduersaries did speake and plot all crueltie against them, vers. 60. *Thou hast seene all their vengeance, and all their deuices against me*: 61. *Thou hast heard their reproch*, &c. And that this might appeare not to be a false imagination and conceite of their owne, he saith; *Lord thou hast seene my wrong*, &c. *Thou hast seene all their rage*, 59. 60. They are all euident and apparant before thee, how closely and couertly soeuer matters be caried in respect of men.

2 The second reason is drawne from Gods former goodnes, and gracious dealing towards them, *Hee had heard them and drawne neere vnto them*: he had considered of them and of their cause: and they knew hee was still as good as he was wont to be, and they vsed as good meanes as they were wont to doe; and therefore they conclude, that he that drew neere vnto them heretofore, would now doe the like againe; vers. 57. 58. These considerations doe reuiue their spirits, and raise their hearts euen out of the pit of desperation. And thus much for the meaning and order of the words. Now let vs harken vnto such doctrines and instructions as are therein contained for our learning.

Vers. 55. *I called vpon thy name*.] This is the speech of the whole Church, who by reason that they are members of one bodie, and temples of one spirit, are brought in speaking throughout this whole booke, as if they were but one person. By [*low dungeon*] is meant desperate euils: they were as it were shut vp in a dungeon, where they had no hope of escaping: yet out of the depth of miserie and anguish and horror, they called vpon the Lord. Whence naturallie ariseth this doctrine.

Thus

That there is no distresse, no breaking and crushing, whatsoeuer, that shall hinder Gods people from praying vnto him. It may for a passion and a fit, cause them to bee at a stand, and bring them euen to their wits end, as it did these here; but they will recouer themselues and get heart againe: and though in their distempers they say God hath forsaken them (which is a wofull thing) yet they recall their words againe, and at length betake themselues to the right meanes of recouerie; which is, to make their griefes knowne vnto God, who is able to saue and readie to succour those that seeke vnto him. This may bee euidentlie scene in Psal. 88. vers. 6. where the man of God bemoneth his case, saying: *Thou hast laid mee in the lowest pit, in darkness, and in the deepe. Thine indignation lieth vpon mee, and thou hast vexed me with all the waues.* *Dott. v. 1*
*The faith-
full can ne-
uer be dri-
uen from
prayer.*

From which words, together with the rest in that Psalm, wee may gather, that hee was in wonderfull sore perplexitie. Now in this extremitie what doth hee? O Lord God of my saluation (saith he) *I cry day and night before thee*; as if hee should haue said: Though thou hast cut off mee, yet I call vpon thee: and though thy hand lie heauie vpon mee, yet I pray still. So *Hezekiab* was smitten (as it seemes) with the plague, and that vnto death: and was in such extremitie, *That hee chattered like a crane or a swallow; and mourned like a dove:* and concluded, *that hee should goe to the gates of the graue, and bee deprived of the residue of his yeares:* His case in appearance was desperate, so that it was as hard to recouer him, as to make the sunne in the firmament to goe backward: yet hee set vpon the matter by prayer, and obtained his desire; insomuch that fiftene yeeres were added to his daies, so that no man in the world had euer such a lease of his life as hee had. So *Jonah* when hee fled from the presence of the Lord, and was therefore cast into the Sea and swallowed vp of the whale: beeing in a low dungeon, where hee had neither sunne-light nor candle-light: yet hee doth not thinke his case remediable, (as indeede it was not) *but hee cryed in his affliction*

Psal. 88. 6.

Isaiah 38. 1.

21.

2. Kings.

20. 1.

Jonah. 2. 1. 2 tion vnto the Lord, and hee heard him: Out of the bellie of hell did hee crie, and God heard his voice: and then as sinne and passion had brought him into danger, so repentance and prayer did helpe him out of it.

Luke 22. 42 Yea the Lord Iesus Christ, when the burden of our sins and of his fathers wrath for the same was so grievous, that it made his soule heauie vnto the death, and pressed blood out of his vaines: yet the more horror hee was in, the more feruently hee prayed vnto his father.

44.
Heb. 5.

And the reason why Christians cannot by any distresse be driuen from prayer, is:

Reason. 1.

Rom. 8. 26. 1 Because hee that is once Gods child, is euer so: and euery child of God, hath the spirit of prayer, which will alwaies stirre vs vp, to make requests with sighs and grones that cannot bee expressed.

If those that cast Gods seruants in prison, could with- all pull Gods spirit out of their hearts, then they had done somewhat to the purpose: but they may as well plucke the sunne out of the firmament, as the holy Ghost out of their soules. And therefore they can neuer bring them so low, but they can cast their eyes vp towards heauen, and make their complaint vnto their God. And if he be with them in prison, as hee was with *Ioseph*, their restraint shall be farre more pleasant than their aduersaries libertie: and they shalbe able with *Paul* and *Silas* to sing Psalmes at midnight through ioy and gladnes.

Act. 16. 25.

Jeb. 5. 4.

2 Secondly, Gods children haue faith in their hearts, and the nature of faith is to beare downe all before it, and to breake thorow al manner of lets and hindrances. Therefore Gods seruants hold vp their heads, because their faith *ouercomes the world*: And therefore wicked hypocrites faint, because the world ouercomes them. When Gods child goes vnto the dungeon, faith goes with him; and then hee will neuer giue ouer praying, but bee more feruent in praying.

And this is certaine, that in worldly helpes, the deeper distresses wee bee in, the least comfort they will affoord:

vs: so spirituall helps, the greater extremities we be in, the more comfort will they minister vnto vs. When wee are helpelesse and hopelesse, then faith workes wonders, and neuer shews forth it selfe so mightilie and powerfullie as when it workes alone. Beautie, and wealth, and strength, and other outward things of the same kinde, when miseries lie heauie vpon vs, and wee beginne to cast an eye to them, expecting some reliefe and comfort from them; will deale with vs, as the high Priests did with *Iudas*: When all went well with him, they made shew of fauor and friendship towards him: but when in the horror and anguish of his soule hee makes his mone vnto them, crying out *that he had sinned, betraying innocent bloud*; they sent him away with a cutted and vncomfortable answer: *What is that to vs?* (say they) Such cold comfort shall we receiue from any earthly supports and props whereon we rest and stay our hearts: when we haue most neede of them, they will stand vs least in stead. So that wee may truely say of them, as *Iob* did of his friends; *miserable comforters are yee all*. But as for those that liue by faith in Christ Iesus, they are vnderlaide with better props than the world can afford: for when they haue none other to deliuer them, they can deliuer themselves by prayer, and by calling vpon Gods name out of the lowest dungeon.

First, this may serue to shew vs the difference betwixt the wicked and the godly, in times of outward or inward affliction, when they drinke both of the same cup, and are plunged in the same miseries. Cast a wicked man into a dungeon and lay him full low, where hee can meete with no worldly helpe, and what course will he take? You shall see that either he will blaspheme God, and bite his tongue for madnes, as they that are spoken of, *Reuel. 18*. Or else hee will grow desperate, and make away with himselfe, as *Iudas* and *Achitophel* and other monsters haue done. But let a godlie man be laid fast in the same dungeon, hee wilbe full of ioy, when the other is full of desperate griefe, *Act. 16, 25*; and sing, *Psalmes* and powre forth many holy prayers, in

stead of the others, imprecations, and blasphemous speeches. *Peter* and *Indas* had both dealt vnfaithfully (though in a farre different degree and manner) with their Lord and master, and were both in the dungeon euen in great perplexitie; but *Peter* goes out, confesseth this fault, weeps bitterly, and gaines exceedingly by it. *Indas* on the other side sorroweth desperately, and speedily dispatcheth himselfe. Whereby doth manifestly appeare the different cariage of the faithfull and of infidels, when they are both ouerburdened with sorrowes and miseries.

Vse 2.

This is for singular comfort vnto Gods people, in that no crosse can befall them, to hinder their prayers; but all shall quicken and inflame the spirit of prayer in them. The issue of their trouble, must needs be good, when they are watered with many holie teares, and sanctified by many holie requests. If they can waite till their haruest come; such a seede time must needs bring them a plentiful and blessed croppe of comfort.

Obiection.

Answer.

Oh, but what if the pestilence should enter into the familie, and the house should be shut vp, that no body could come to me? What of that? The question now wilbe, whether you be a hypocrite or a Christian? If you bee sure that you are no hypocrite, then though no bodie come vnto you, yet God will come vnto you: and though you cannot goe to your friends, yet you may 'goe to God, and that will serue the turne well enough; the spirit of prayer will neuer faile you: and if you can make your requests knowne vnto the Lord, he will cause all to worke together for the best, and giue an happie issue, either by life or death, vnto all your distractions, doubts and feares.

Rom. 8.

Vers. 55. I called vpon thy name.] This was it that stirred them vp to prayer, euen the knowledge of Gods name; his maiestie is so glorious, that it would make them flie from him: and his essence is so incomprehensible, that it is a light that none can haue access vnto, and a huge sea that will drowne such as will aduenture to wade into it: but the knowledge of Gods sufficiencie to helpe, and of his mer-

cie

cie and free fauor, whereby hee is readie to helpe; and the like is it that encourageth them to come before the Lord. Which affordeth this doctrine:

That the name of God is the onelie cause that brings *Doff. 2.* Christians into Gods presence, and makes them to call vp- *The right* on his name with strong cries, and comfortable requests. *understan-* This is eident, Psal. 9. 10. where the Prophet sheweth, *ding of Gods* how they come to seeke vnto God: *name, very* *They that know thy helpfull in* *name will trust in thee, for thou neuer failest them that seeke prayer.* thee. How come they to seeke God? They first trust in God. And how come they to trust in God? By the knowledge of Gods name: which till men doe know, they can neuer trust in God, nor seeke to God. Therefore it is said in the songs of Salomon: *Thy name is an ointment powred forth: Cant. 1. 2.* like vnto that ointment mentioned in the Gospell, which filled all the house with the odour of it. No ointment can so delight the naturall sense, as the name of God doth the hearts of the faithfull; in which regard it is added in that place, *Therefore the virgins loue thee:* That is, such as do not goe a whoring after fleshly lusts, and after the vanities of the world. They must needs loue Christ, because they know that there is no euill; but in his name they shall haue a medicine against it. No doubt, but there they shall finde a resolution for it: no good thing, but there they may get a certaintie of obtaining it. This name of God is notably and comfortably set downe: *Exod. 34. 6. and Isa. 9. 6.*

In Exodus thus: *The Lord, the Lord, strong, mercifull, and* *The name* *gratious, &c.* *of God.*

The first thing that wee may for our comfort here consider of, is the word *Iehouah*: signifying the essence of *I. Iehouah.* God, and his absolute perfection in all his attributes, and shewing his constancie in all his properties that follow, as hauing his being in and of himselfe; so that this prevents an obiection, concerning all that which followes. For one might say, God indeede hath shewed himselfe *strong, mercifull and gracious, &c.* But what is that to vs now? Why he is *Iehouah, the same for euer*: and therefore looke what he hath

hath beene in the daies of olde, you may bee assured hee will be the same still. But because this part of Gods name is handled else where; it shal be needeleffe at large to intreat of it in this place.

See Mr.
Dods expo-
sition of the
Command.
the preface
thereof.
I am Iehoa-
nah.
2. Strong.
Isa. 9. 6.

2 The second thing to bee considered is, the strength of God, *the Lord, the Lord strong, &c.* Whence wee are to learne, that all power is in him, and from him, and for him. And in like manner, is Christ called *the mightie God*: Thereby implying not onelie that hee is mightie in his owne nature, but that hee hath his might to vse for our saluation, and our enemies destruction: and that hee doth and will vse it to that purpose.

In which regard it is said in that place; *that hee is giuen to vs.* And in the first of the *Reuelation*, *hee is said to walke in the midst of the seuen golden Candlesticks*: that is, in the midst of his Church, and *to haue feete of burning brasfe*: Not onely to tread downe all inward and outward enemies, but to consume them when they are downe: for in that respect are his feete said not onely to bee of brasfe, but of burning brasfe.

Reuel. 1. 13.
15.

Ill weedes when they are cut vp, if the rootes be left behinde, will quickly spring vp againe: therefore will Christ burne vp roote and branch, that there may be no feare nor danger of their second growth.

So that if we knew this part of Gods name, to wit, his al- sufficient power, what affliction or triall should make vs faint?

Rom. 4. 19.
20. 21.

The least temptation or affliction, if God support vs not in it, will bee too strong for vs: the greatest, yea all rushing at once vpon vs, if this mightie God bee on our side, shall not be able to hurt vs or daunt vs.

This was it that confirmed *Abrahams* faith; as the Apostle *Paul* witnesseth. Though *Sarabs* wombe were dead, hee knew God was not dead, but that he was able to giue him a sonne of her: And that that God who shall at length raise vs out of the dead graue, could and would raise him vp a sonne out of her dead wombe.

And

And so *Moses*, when hee had fixe hundred thousand and vpward, to prouide for in the wildernes, where he had neither bread nor drinke for them; yet hee trusted and relied on God, who could bring water out of the flint, as well as out of the river: and bread out of the clouds, as well as out of the barne. *Canaan* hee knew could not maintaine them, without Gods blessing, and with it the barren wildernes could.

Exod. 16.
& 17.

So *Jonathan* when hee went against a great manie thousand *Philistines*, he knew Gods name to be [*Mightie*] For hee stood resolu'd of this; *that God could deliuer with few, as well as with many.* And yet *Asa* went further: for when hee had a very huge armie comming against him, and no equal forces in any proportion to withstand them, hee notwithstanding comes confidently to God for helpe, assuring himselfe, *that God could saue and deliuer with none, as well as with many.*

1. Sam. 14. 6
2 Chron. 14.
11.

And so may it as truelie bee said, that God can helpe by few friends as well as by many: yea, without all friends and meanes, as if wee had all that the world could afford vs.

Oh but my miserie is desperate!

Obiection.

Neuer say so: What if you be in the low dungeon? Was not *Jonah* so? And yet hee prayed and was helped: therefore neuer be dismayed: Your troubles are great, but your God is greater and mightier to helpe you out of them, than they are to holde you fast still. The Lord hath made the heauens and the earth, by his worde, and that drowned the whole world in his displeasure. This mighty Lord, I say, rides vpon the heauens (as it is *Dent. 33.*) full of maiestie, and full of abilitie to deliuer you; and to set you free from the strongest bonds of affliction.

Answer.

3 The third thing in Gods name is, that hee is *mercifull.* 3. *Mercifull.* Which worde signifieth, that God hath such bowels of compassion towards his seruants, as a mother hath towards the child of her wombe. There neede not many exhortations, much lesse an eloquent oration to a mother, to

stirre her vp to succor, and relieue her child, when it stands in neede of her helpe: and yet put all the kindnesse of all the men and women in the world together, and it wil come but to a drop, in comparison of that sea of mercie that is in our mercifull God.

Obiect. And this propertie is well ioyned with the former: for a poore afflicted soule hearing of Gods power might say: I know God is powerfull, but what is that to me? perchance hee may vse his power to my ouerthrow.

Answer. Nay (saies he) God is as mercifull as hee is powerfull, why then should any bee discouraged by miserie; sith that is the verie obiect of mercie? Whence it is that this argument is often vsed in the scripture: *Lord helpe mee, for I am sore troubled: Lord saue mee, for I am poore and needie.*

Luke 15. And this mercie of God wee may more cleerely see in the Father of the prodigall sonne, who perceiuing his lost child comming towards him, hee runnes towards his sonne, and falls on his necke and kisseth him; giuing him all kinde entertainment that might bee: his verie miserie was a sufficient motiue to worke vpon his fathers heart: neither doth hee at all vpbraide him with his former leaud behauiour. Now if any earthly father can bee and ought to be thus mercifull, how much more will our heauenly father, especiallie since that hee loueth vs better than any earthly father can loue his children? and shews forth his loue vpon every occasion as the Prophet *Hosea* testifieth, *Hosea 14.4.* saying: *In thee the fatherlesse findeth mercie.*

Obiection. Oh but I am worthy of no mercie.

4. Gracious. *Answer.* What of that? Gods name is also *gracious* That is, louing and shewing mercie without any merit: he will not carrie till wee deserue it, but will freely shew forth his goodnes towards vs. Doe not wee giue foode and raiment to little children that hang on the breasts? If parents should stay till they deserue it, they would neuer grow to bee men and women. Therefore it is said of *Abraham*, that *hee beleeued in him that iustifieth the sinner.* Noting thereby, that sinne cannot hinder Gods fauor from offenders,

offenders, but that through faith they shalbe iustified, and made innocent in Gods account, as if they had neuer offended at all.

Let vs not then when wee are in distresse, be discouraged, by reason of our corruptions, but goe to the Lord who wil shew himselfe gracious notwithstanding them all.

Oh but what comfort can I sinfull wretch haue, to goe *Obiection.* to so holy a God?

Why doe you not know his name? He is *a gracious God: Answer.* and when wee can finde no matter of worthinesse in our selues, he can finde matter enough in his owne nature and in his sonnes merits. If wee could finde any desert in our selues, or our workes, God should lose his name of being gracious.

But alas, I haue prouoked him, and iustly drawne his *Obiection.* hand vpon mee by mine owne finnes.

What if you haue, *hee is slow to anger.* That is, long ere *s. Slow to* hee be prouoked, and when hee is prouoked, easie to bee *anger.* appeased. Wee can no sooner fall out with our finnes, but hee falls in with vs. An earthly father will not take euerie aduantage against his child; and when the child is grieued for a great fault, will not good parents be easilie satisfied? And why should wee thinke God harder than our selues? At least let vs make him as good as our selues, and be assured that when wee haue kindled his wrath against vs, one teare of true repentance will quench all the flame thereof, and draw downe his pitie and compassion vpon vs. To this *Dauid* giueth testimonie, saying: *The Lord is slow to anger, and of great kindnesse: he will not alwaies chide, nor keepe his anger for ener.* *Ps. 103. 8. 9.* And this hee himselfe found by experience. For when he, being a King, and that of Gods owne choise, set ouer his owne people, and withall a holy Prophet: in both which respects, hee was to bee a patterne of all godlines and righteousness vnto others: when hee (I say) after many mercies receiued, had grievously prouoked the Lord, insomuch as hee was angrie with him: and then *2. Sam. 11.* did not repent for his sinne, but lay in it, and added diuers *27.*

other hainous offences vnto it, yet after all this God doth not reiect him, but sends his Prophet *Nathan* vnto him, and is more readie to offer him pardon than hee is to aske it, and when hee did but beginne to make confession of his sinne, God tells him forthwith, that *hee had put away his sinne.*

And this wonderfull readinesse in God to bee appeased towards penitent sinners, the Prophet *Isaiah* maketh mention of; bringing in God himselfe, speaking in this manner: *I will not contend for euer, neither will I be alwaies wroth: For the spirit should faile before mee, and I haue made the breath.* Where wee see, that as *Psalm 103*: there is a reason drawne from Gods nature why, hee cannot deale rigorously with vs; namely, because *hee pitie vs, as a father doth his child*: So here there is a reason brought from our nature, why hee cannot be ouer-seuere, to wit, that *then the spirit would faile before him*: and those whom hee hath made and redeemed, would perish and bee vtterly consumed. Men were not able to beare the continuance and grieuousnesse of his hand, but would sinke vnder their burden, and so should be a greater loser than they, in that he should lose them, whom hee hath so long and so intirely loued, for whom hee hath so deerely paide: and therefore hee saith, *that hee will not contend for euer, &c.*

Obiection,

But some might say, it is true indeede, there is no fault on Gods part: if I could fit my selfe to seeke for mercie, and to receiue mercie, as I ought to doe. But alas, I come farre short euery way: my prayers are fewe and weake: my memorie is fraile and slipperie, I cannot conceiue nor carie away the Sermon, nor profit by the Sacrament, and other of Gods ordinances.

Answer.

What of all this? You must remember that *God is abundant in kindnesse, hee will not breake the bruised reede, nor quench the smoking flax.* It is the propertie of kindnesse to take small things in good worth, to passe by infirmities, and to bee easie to bee intreated. And this is euident in earthly parents: for they will accept of verie small matters

at

at the hands of their children, that would doe better if they could: how much more will God, who is the author of all kindnesse both in men and beasts? who knoweth *Psalm 103.* whereof wee are made, and remembreth that wee are but dust.

Indeepe, if wee live in presumptuous finnes, and bee proud and stomackfull, and will not stoupe vnder Gods hand, then Gods greatest kindnesse is to scourge vs, vntill hee bring vs home to himselfe. But if wee be once pure and humble in heart, though wee cannot attaine to that measure of sanctification as others haue, nor powre out our soule in prayer as wee should, and as wee would, yet God will take all in good part. Hee that will reward a cup of cold water, hee will reward a cold prayer. God looks not for perfection from poore weake creatures, that are full of imperfection.

But how shall I know that this kindnesse of God shalbee performed vnto me, seeing that I haue prayed and waited long, and yet am neuer the neerer? *Obiection.*

Because (as it followes in the next place) God is *abundant in truth* as well as in kindnesse. As hee neuer threatens any thing, but he executes it: so hee neuer promiseth any thing, but hee performes it. Neuer any yet could charge him with breach of promise. He hath said, *that those that feare him, shall want nothing that is good: Call vpon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliuer thee, &c.* And the like, who euer did so, and found not according to his expectation? If then none haue euer failed of his hope, why should not we rest vpon his promise? Take away his truth and take away his Godhead. *Answer.* *7 Abundant in truth.* *Psalm 34. 9.* *10.* *Psalm 50. 15.*

Many there are in the world, who, when their money and friends, and outward staies are taken away, beginne to thinke with themselves, what shall wee doe now? What will become of vs? Wee see all is gone: But is Gods truth gone? Hath not hee promised to provide for vs when we are poore, as wel as when we are rich? When we are in sickness, as well as when we are in health? Hath not he said: I

Neb. 13. 6. Will not leaue thee nor forsake thee? Did not hee prouide for vs in our infancie? And why should not wee trust in him as well in our age? Oh, then we had good friends to looke vnto vs. And who raised vp those friends? Cannot God, that inclines the hearts of some to pitie vs then, draw others hearts to haue compassion on vs hereafter?

Oh, but I know no friends that will shew me that fauor? Neither did you in your infancie, and yet God did prouide some, and that without your intreatie. How much more will hee doe it vpon your faithfull prayers? Or els (which is best of all) take you to himselfe, where you shall stand in no more neede of friends and helpers.

3 Reseruing
kindnes for
thousands.

But because wee are much led by example, and looke how God hath dealt with others: therefore hee addeth next, [*reseruing mercie for thousands*] Giuing vs to vnderstand thereby, that hee hath fouds of mercie for all that stand in neede thereof. Neuer any went to God for mercie, but hee found mercie; if hee sought in faith, as God bids him.

With earthly Kings, hee that comes not first speeds worst: but it is not so with the King of heauen: hee hath sufficient for those that come to him last, as well as for those that come to him first. Wee see this in a creature of God, euen in the sunne, which communicates his light to all, though they bee neuer so many, as well as if they were but a fewe. And what shall wee thinke of God the Creator of the same; cannot he comfort many thousands as well as one person, and yet his store not bee lessened a whit? Yes surely, there are many thousands in heauen, that were once as bad as wee are, and yet now they are in a Paradise of rest, out of the reach of all sinne and sorrow. And who would not come to such a Physition, as hath wrought a perfect cure of so many, and that of free cost, and neuer suffered any one to miscarie that was willing to be his patient?

Iob. 8.

Men would lie at the poole of *Bethesda* many yeares, expecting to bee healed: wee neede not lie so long at the gate

gate of heauen, for the curing of our soules, but wee are sure to be perfectly helped, when wee are truly humbled and fitted for helpe.

But my miseries doe not trouble mee so much as my *Obiect*.
finnes, which are many and grieuous and of long continuance.

For answer to that hee saith, that *God forgiueth iniquitie, transgression, and sinne.* *Answer.* And if he should not shew himselfe to bee such a God towards the militant Church, hee should lose his name and his people at once: but hee pardons all these kinds of sinne. *Iniquitie*] That is, originall sinne, and the peruersenesse of our nature, that cleaues so fast vnto vs: *Transgression*:] That is, sinnes of rebellion and presumption: *And Sinne*:] That is, sinnes of custome, and such as are growne to a habit. If any one be wearie of this burden, God will giue him a speedie dispatch. This a man may boldly claime at Gods hand, and intreat him to bee God: for that hee could not bee, vnlesse hee should performe this for vs.

This is also the name of his sonne, who is called *Iesus*, *Math. 1. 21.* because hee doth save his people from their sinnes. Therefore let vs take the accusation and humiliation for sinne vpon vs, and pray to God to pardon vs according to his name: and then God will take away the guilt and punishment of sinne it selfe from vs, and be fullie pacified towards vs.

But yet there might arise an other obiection (as vnbeliefe is full of them) which is this: for all that hath beene spoken of Gods goodnesse towards his chosen, yet wee see wicked men prosper and hold vp the head: and Gods children sinke and are trampled vnder foote. And then there comes muttering and repining thoughts, that God doth not gouerne the world righteously: Magistrates looke not to their dutie well: That those that are men of place and authoritie, haue not courage for the truth, and so the righteous are wronged, and the Church ouer-runne by the vngodly of the world.

Nay (saith *Moses*) hee holds not the wicked innocent: let them *Answer.*

Not holding
the wicked
innocent.

Nahum 1.
2.3.

Hab. 1. 12.

Obiect.

Psal. 75. 5.

Answer.

11. Visiting.

Obiect.

Answer.

Christ a
counsellor.

Reuel. 1.

them take their swinge, and make hauocke for a time: God may spare them long, yet will visit them at the last. According to that of Nahum: *God is zealous, and the Lord reuengeth: The Lord reuengeth, euen the Lord of anger, the Lord will take vengeance on his aduersaries, and he reserueth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger, but hee is great in power, and will not surely cleere the wicked, &c.* For as Habakkuk saith, *hee hath ordained them for iudgement, and established them for correction.*

Yet wee see they goe to their graues in peace, and are not in trouble like other men.

Say they doe: yet God will meete with them in their children, and punish their sinnes in their posteritie: as it is said in the text, *Visiting the iniquities of the parents upon their children, and upon their childrens children, unto the third and fourth generation.* They shall tast of the bitter cup of Gods wrath here, as their fathers doe in hell. Oh, but who shall doe this? There is none to curbe them! Yes God himselfe will doe it: hee will visit them for their sinnes.

Here wee see what a number of temptations are swept away, by the right vnderstanding and applying of the name of God.

Now for that other place, *Isaiah 9. 6.* Christ is there said *to bee a counsellor, the prince of peace, &c.* Such a counsellor as is alwaies at hand to aduise vs: for hee walkes in the mids of vs. Such a one as is furnished with wisdom sufficient to counsell vs: for hee is the ancient of daies, and the verie wisdom of the father. Such a one as will giue vs his aduice freely. And lastly such a one as can and will make his counsell effectuell, for hee is the mighty God, and can do what hee will. Therefore what should a Christian trouble himselfe? Hath hee craftie enemies? Goe to Christ for direction, whose wisdom is infinitely beyond their policie. Hath hee strong enemies? Goe to him who is mightier than they all. In a word, hath he any outward affliction or inward corruption, that doth annoy and trouble him? Let him haue recourse to this name of God, and there he shall

shall finde a remedie for all; which beeing so many waies profitable and helpfull to a Christian, that must needs follow, which was at first set downe, to wit, that the knowledge of the name of God, is a most effectuall meanes to draw vs vnto seruient and faithfull prayer.

This therefore serues first to confute ignorant persons, *Use 1.* and to shew that their prayers are but the exercising of their tongues, and of their lips; because they are not acquainted with Gods name: and thence it is that they giue ouer praying in time of miserie. When they haue money and friends, health and strength and the like, they beginne to thinke and speake with *David: That their mount is so strong, that they shall neuer be cast downe:* and conclude with the rich man in the Gospell, *that they haue riches laid vp for many yeares, and therefore bid their soules take their rest.* But what saith God, *thou foole, &c.* These are ignorant fooles indeede: for doe they not know *that power belongs vnto God? Is it not his name to be called the mightie God?* *Psal. 30.* Riches haue no power at all in them, they cannot make a man liue one houre longer or happier. *Psal. 62.*

When *David* boasted of his subiects and souldiers, and of the arme of flesh that hee had gotten, what became of it? God withdrew his face a little, and his sonne and subiects and all were against him. And as riches haue no power in them, so neither doe they procure any iot of kindnes: *for kindnesse belongs vnto God: it is his name to be abundant in kindnesse:* *Psal. 2.* And therefore wee must goe to him for these things, and not to the world: and it is Gods mercie that men should sometimes deceiue vs, that so we might learne to trust in God, and to seeke to God for these things, and not so much vnto outward meanes. Carnall men in their prosperitie will bragge, that they can call vpon God as well as the best of them. But this is sure, if Gods name be not as an ointment powred out and spread vpon their hearts, in time of distresse, they will seeke vnto any rather than vnto God. And thence it is, that when outward things faile them, they are altogether hartlesse, and comfortlesse:

They complaine that they want many things, and so they doe indeede: but all is for that they want the knowledge of Gods name: which whosoever knows, he will not distrust God though hee haue no meanes: nor trust in them, though they haue all meanes.

Use 2.

Secondly, this is for instruction: if we would haue comfortable hearing in heaven, in all our wants and miseries, wee must labor to know Gods name, as it is reuealed in his worde, that so wee may bee able to reioyce in all distresses, and to quiet our hearts in all distempers. And when we find more than ordinarie discomforts, let vs take occasion thereby to condemne our selues for our ignorance of Gods name.

Many that are accounted wise men, are too much cast downe in the time of miserie, which is an euident signe that how excellent so euer they be for worldly policie, yet they want this heauenly wisdom. For if they were acquainted with Gods name, they should be able comfortably to powre out their hearts before God, knowing that the Lord which created all things of nothing, is able to saue without meanes, and against meanes.

Use 3.

Thirdly, this is for singular consolation to those that by many wofull miseries, and sore temptations, haue gotten some experimentall knowledge of Gods name: not a verball, but a working knowledge. They haue felt his power, and tasted of his mercie, and grace, and kindnesse, &c. Such haue enough, yea more than all the world to stay vpon:

Pro. 18. 10. As Salomon saith; *the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth vnto it, and is exalted.* Here is a refuge and a hiding place for all iust men, and for none els.

Others may make a kinde of offer, to goe towards that Tower: but if they faile in righteousness, they will bee so farre from running, that they will goe limping, nay, halt downe right, and neuer come thither: but all that are vp-right in heart, may haue free access, and sufficient shelter when they come thither, not onelie from the inuasions of men, but from the wrath of God, and from the stroakes of
God

God, as the pestilence or the like: yea, from the furie of Satan, and from the assaults of sinne.

All other towers are but poore weake corages. Let men dwell where they will, whither can they goe, but death will finde them out? They may flie from the Plague, but, God will pursue them: for he is not an archer that hath but one arrow; or such arrowes onelie, as will reach those that are neere: but though they should runne to the end of the world, hee is able to shoote at them, and the arrowes of his vengeance will finde them out. No strength can defend them, when he comes against them with his strength: nay, all the power of men is but a broken reede, and all meanes of no force in themselves. If wee onelie vse them in obedience, they will bee as a staffe to leane vpon: if wee rest on them, they will be as a broken staffe that will deceiue vs, and giue vs a fall.

Verf. 56. *Thou hast heard my voice, stop not thine eares.*

57. *Thou drewest neere, &c.* Whence this doctrine ariseth:

That Gods children in their prayers and seruices, doe marke and know how they speed: so that they cannot on-
lie say, I thanke God, at such and such a time I prayed, but
O Lord thou diddest then heare *my voice, then diddest thou draw neere unto mee:* at such a time I was put to it, and
thou deliueredst mee out of great danger. This wee see in
the spouse, who when her beloued was departed from her,
saith, *In my bed night by night I sought him, Whom my soule loueth, and found him not.* Shee had not that ioy and re-
freshing, as she was wont to haue, from the vse of the pri-
uate meanes, and shee knew it, and obserued it full well.
Then she went abroad, and there found as little successe.
Afterwards shee comes to conferre with Gods Ministers
how she might recouer her loue to Christ, and the feeling
of Christs loue vnto her, and yet there shee had not that
full successe, as she expected. Then she goes a little further,
that is, (as was before shewed) waits patiently vpon God,
and then she found him whom her soule loued, and tooke hold of
him; that is, faster hold then euer she had done before. She

*Doct. 3.
We must
observe how
we speed in
religious
exercises.*

Cant. 3. 1. 2.

had paid so dearely for her negligence, that she would be warie how she failed in her dutie any more. So that when she sped well or ill, she knew how it went with her. This point is further proued vnto vs out of another verse of this Chapter of the *Lamentation*, where these words are vsed:

Lament. 3. 8

When I cry and shoute, hee shutteth out my prayer: Not but that God tooke notice of it, and had a time to reward it: but for the present he gaue them no answer.

They had hard hearts, and God saw that one crie and shoute would not be sufficient to mollifie and soften them: and therefore he lets them pray and cry againe, and againe, and yet still they had the repulse, as they obserued to their great griefe. Answerable to this, is that in the Psalm, where *Dauid* saith, *If I regard wickednesse in my heart, the Lord will not heare me: But God hath heard me, and considered the voice of my prayer.*

Psal. 66. 18. 19.

Reason.

And there is reason why as they did marke how they sped, so should wee also.

For vnlesse wee doe so, it is impossible that wee should euer bee thankfull for that wee receiue, or lay vp any store of comfort against the time to come. If wee speed ill, wee shall goe away without any care or studie to grow better: if wee speed well, wee shall depart without any desire of glorifying God, or of confirming our hearts for afterwards.

Whereas diligent obseruation how God deales with vs, would worke in vs great experience, both for our humiliation and consolation.

For sometimes Gods seruants haue a comfortable answer to their sutes, and then they come away as fresh, and nimble, and ioyfull, as if their hearts had beene made glad by sweet and pleasant wine. At another time, they come limping, and fainting away, as if they had beene stricke on the head. So for the Sermon, now and then they depart from it, as from some notable feast, so merrie and comfortable, as if they had made the best bargaine that euer they did in their liues; at some other times they come

Psal. 109. 15.

out

out of the church hanging downe their heads and full of pensiuenesse, as if they had receiued the sentence of death. What is the cause hereof? Profane persons thinke they are the melancholiest, and vnconstantest people in the world. But will not they themselues looke heauilie on the matter, when they are crossed in things that are most deere vnto them? And why then should they blame Gods seruants, if they be sometimes merrie, and sometimes heauie, according as they are crossed or comforted in the worde of life, which is more deare vnto them, then all the treasures of the earth? Howsoeuer they may charge them to be vnconstant, yet indeede they themselues are more vnconstant: For let them haue to deale with some great Iudge, about matters of their estate, and let them be told this day, that they are likely to haue good and fauourable hearing: that the Iudge likes well of them, and of their cause; how ioyfull and iocund will they be? How will they talke of it, and in a sort boast of it? But let them come to the Iudge themselues the next day, and let him frowne vpon them, and tell them: I vnderstand you are a leaud fellow: I know your practises well inough: looke to your selfe and acquite you well, lest I strip you of your lands and life together. Will not such a salutation cast them into their dumps, and make them looke heauie and sad, as if they were halfe dead? And if one should aske them: why are you so variable? They would wonder why he should make such a question. Haue wee not iust cause to bee cast downe (would they say) when the Iudge that gaue mee such good hopes before, doth now looke and speake so wrathfullie against mee? And wherefore then will you finde fault with Gods seruants, who deale with the King and Iudge of heauen and earth, in the matter of their saluation: whose fauor they esteeme more than all things in the world: and whose displeasure they feare more then all the mens in the world: yea then death it selfe? Why (I say) doe you finde fault with them, if their comforts ebbe and flow, as matters goe better or worse betwixt God and them?

Use 1.

This is for cōfutation of carnall hearers, who are affected at all times alike. They haue heard many hundred sermons, but they were neuer more comforted at one, than at another. They are none of these changelings, but the same men still. But let such know, that hee that doth neuer feelee himselfe sicke, it is greatly to bee doubted hee is quite dead. *Paul* was once aliue, before the Law came, and so are all vnregenerate men in their owne conceite: they can heare the word without feare and trembling (they thanke God) and bee neuer troubled in their consciences as some are. Doe you thanke God for this senselesnesse? Nay, doe not so, for that is a shamefull taking of his name in vaine: but rather repent before God, and craue pardon for the same. For they that feare least, are the most hard-hearted people of all other, and they neuer succeed well.

Rom. 7.

C

Pro. 28.13.

The like may be said of them who are alwaies alike affected in prayer: they neuer yet knew what a faithfull prayer meanes.

Use 2.

Secondly, this is for comfort to those that see how they thriue, and marke when they speed well or ill, when they come to the word, to prayer, or the Sacrament: if they find a good effect, they may bee assured that God loues them; and so be thankfull for his mercie, and confident thereof for afterwards: If they goe away without an answer, and without comfort (as many times the Saints of God doe) they shall gaine a greater measure of humilitie, and bee more broken hearted: and though they cannot end with thanksgiuing, yet they may end with the prayer of the Publican; *Lord be mercifull vnto mee a sinner.*

And there is as great gaine by humiliation at some times, as by consolation and sweet feelings at other times. For if wee should haue alwaies a present answer, wee should grow secure, and contemne these answers of God. For such is our vile nature, that when things grow common, they grow by degrees out of reckoning and estimation with vs: therefore God will not suffer vs alwaies to haue present hearing.

What

What is the difference then (may some man say) betweene the regenerate and vnregenerate? sith both of them pray, and neither of them haue hearing. *Question.*

Here is the difference, that the one sort are not dead as the other are. He that feeles an ague or any other disease, and is vexed and pained with it, any simple bodie will say, surely such a one is aliue: and so it may be concluded of euerie Christian that is troubled in his soule, that his prayers finde no better accessse vnto Gods throne: it is sure such a one hath the life of grace in him, which is an euermouring life. *Answer.*

But as for wicked men that neuer feele their sicknesse, but grow to comparisons, that they can pray as well as the best of them: they are dead in sinne, and without repentance shall perish in their sinnes.

Verf. 5. 6. *Thou hast heard my voice, therefore stop not thine eare.*] Whence this doctrine may bee gathered: That those whom God hath once heard in mercie hee will alwaies heare, preuaile with God once and euer. With men it is nota good argument to say, Sir you paid such & such a debt for me: you holpe me out of prison, such and such a time, therefore doe it againe: for it may be hee hath by that meanes so weakened his estate alreadie, that he is not able to doe the like againe. But it is otherwise with God, all his former benefits, are of so many bonds for new blessings: if hee inclined his care vnto vs, such and such a time, when wee powred out our prayers and teares before him, wee shall finde the like successe againe, vpon the vse of the like meanes. *Doff. 4. VVhom God once heares in mercie he euer heares.*

The reason hereof is drawne from Gods nature: *He is Reason.* *Iehonah, yesterday, to day, and the same for euer.* If hee haue receiued vs yesterday, he can and will doe it in like sort to day, yea, and hence-forward for euer, there is no change in him. There remains the same cause of mercie still in his nature: hee had as much reason to loue Peter after his fall, as before. And when Christ prayed that Peters faith might not faile, that proceeded from Christs goodnesse, not from Peters. *Heb. 13. 8.*

Peters. If our prayers haue beene once a sweet smelling sacrifice in the nostrils of the Lord, they shall neuer bee reiected by him: once welcome to him and alwaies. It is an argument that will surelie preuaile with God, *Lord thou drewest neare once, therefore doe it still.* To this purpose it is said; *that Christ is the author and finisher of our faith:* where once he hath laid the foundation, hee will reare vp the building, and bring it to perfection. So is it said in the *Psalme: From everlasting to everlasting thou art our God.* If euer God should haue refused to shew vs fauor, it would haue beene then, when wee were dead in sinne: but euen then hee sought to vs, ere wee sought after him, and before wee imagined any such matter, hee was at the cost to bestow his sonnes blood vpon vs, that his spirit might bee shedde abroad in our hearts, that wee might haue experience of his loue: that wee might haue title to his sonnes death and merits, and beeing once his sonnes and daughters might still bee fauoured, relieved and succoured by him.

Heb. 12.2.

Psal. 90.2.

Let vs consider what wee doe, and be thorowly grounded and perswaded vpon good warrant, before we take comfort to our selues in Gods mercies: but when wee haue a good foundation to build our assurance vpon, let vs know that all Gods mercies are everlasting mercies.

Ysa. 1.

First, this doctrine makes for the reproofe and terror of such men and women, as hope that if the pestilence, or death, or any other heauie affliction should come, they should bee in case good enough, and doe as well as the best. And why? They will make many good prayers, and desire God to bee mercifull to them, and to forgiue them. Well, what wil they answeere to this? They haue made good prayers (as they call them) heretofore, but what entertainment did they find with God? They haue heard manie a sermon, but what grace haue they gotten thereby? They haue come to the Sacrament as often as their neighbors, but what mortification haue they gained by it? Nay surelie they cannot say much for such matters: they are things

things that they neuer marked. Then their case will bee hard when trouble comes. If they haue no old store, they will bee shut out as the foolish virgins were.

Math. 15.

A Christian hath an old stocke which he liues vpon; God hath heard him often, hee hath giuen thanks to God as often, or at least verie often: hee hath gone through the pikes, but still God hath beene at his right hand, the remembrance whereof, will much sustaine the heart.

But as for them that haue no experience of Gods former fauors, in answering them in the daies and times when they haue called vpon him, they can haue little hope that they shall finde any kindnesse from him, when afflictions take hold of them.

If a prisoner that hath deserued death should say, hee hopes well, and lookes for fauor: And why? He hath euerie day, put vp two or three supplications to the Iudge: we would aske him presently, But what answer received you? If he should tell vs, nay I neuer lookt to that, we would not thinke hee should speed much the better for all his supplications. Such is the case of hypocrites, that draw neere vnto God with their lips, but not with their hearts: though they thinke themselues the safer and better for that, yet in truth they are not, because they had neuer in their liues any signe of Gods loue towards them for good, vpon the making of their suites knowne vnto him. And therefore let them get some of this store: for that is it that will stand them more in stead than all the goods in the world.

Secondly, here is a vse of comfort for them that haue lost the sight and feeling of Gods fauor. Had they it euer at all? Then they shall bee sure to haue it againe. For this was *Dauids* case: *Hee did thinke on God, and was more troubled: hee prayed, and his spirit was full of anguish, and all seemed to make against him.* What then? *I considered (saith hee) the daies of old, and the yeeres of ancient time: I called to remembrance my song in the night, I communed with mine owne heart, and my spirit searched diligently, &c.* He recountes with himselfe, how faithfull hee had beene vnto God: how

Ps. 2.

Psal. 77. 3.

4. 5. 6.

H

mercifull

mercifull God had beene vnto him, and then his little sparke of hope and comfort became a great flame.

If a man haue old prouision, he will doe well enough in the hardest times. If one can say frō an humble and sincere heart: Lord thou knowest that I haue shed many a bitter teare in secret for my sinnes: I haue often with ioy praised thee for thy mercies, and powred out my heart in singing Psalmes in priuate: I haue sought thee in the night, when no bodie was by, when no eye was priuie vnto it: and at such times thou hast vouchsafed to looke downe from heauen with a mercifull eye vpon me, and hast filled my soule with ioy vspeakeable and glorious, &c. If (I say) one haue these and the like euidences from former experience, hee may assure his heart that God will still be found of him in goodnesse till the shutting vp of his daies, and neuer withdraw his louing kindnesse from him. Oh, but now God frownes vpon mee, and withholds his louing countenance from me: What then? Hath there not beene a time when you could say, God drew neere vnto you, and beheld you with a fauourable eye? Yes, they cannot denie that: why then neuer feare, he will returne againe, though hee hide his face for a time: Albeit, *heauinesse may indure for a night, yet ioy shall come in the morning.* For if God bee once ours, hee is euer ours. And this should bee the staffe and stay of Christians, when they haue lost their feeling.

Object.

Answer.

Psal. 30. 5.

Vers. 56. *Stop not thine eare from my sigh, and from my cry.*] Here is shewed what seruice they brought vnto God: they did *not pray alone, but sigh; nor sigh alone, but cry.* That is, they drew forth their prayers from a feruent heart, which was as a thirstie land that gapes for the raine, and is euen readie to eate vp and to deuoure the clouds. Which words afford vs this doctrine:

Dott. 4.
Feruentie
in prayer re-
quisite.
Joel 2. 13.

That they that would not haue God to shut his eares against their prayers, must bee sure that they sigh and crie: and that their petitions proceede from a broken heart, and from an humble spirit. So the Prophet *Joel* bids them, *rend*

your

your hearts, and not your garments, &c. For till the heart be
euen puld in pieces by godly sorrow, sinne and lust will
not out: and then there can bee no acceptance looked for
with God, either of vs or of our seruices. Therefore *Da-* *Psal. 51. 17.*
uid saith; *the sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit: a contrite*
and broken heart. O Lord, *thou wilt not despise.* Therefore did
Christ *groane in his spirit*, when he prayed for that poore man *Mark 7. 34.*
in the Gospell, So did *Hannah sigh and weepe sore, and pow-* *1. Sam. 1. 15.*
red out her soule before God.

And there is good reason, to moue vs to labor thus in- *Reason.*
wardly to bee touched: For till wee haue the sense and fee-
ling of our wants, wee may well speake, but wee can ne-
uer pray: till the heart be pained with sinne and corrupti-
on, it is impossible to be seruient for the pardon of it, as it
is for one that hath no feeling of pouertie, earnestly to in-
treat for a supply of his necessities: and for one that hath no
sense of his sicknesse, to be an instant suter for the meanes
of health.

First this serues for the reproofe of those that come with *Pse 1.*
drowfie and verball prayers: who deale like corrupt and
naughtie Lawyers, that looke for a fee, and yet when they
are at the barre, tell a drowfie and idle tale, without any
feeling of their clients cause: So many there are that come
with words of course to intreat God to pardon their sins,
and strengthen their faith, but neuer powre out their soules
before God, but onelie spend a little breath: And they
speed accordingly; for their cold prayers bring but cold
successe.

And this is true not onelie of the wicked, but euen of
the godly. *David* rored and cried, but hee was neuer the *Psal. 32.*
better, till hee confessed his sinne, being inwardly griued
for the same: but then both sinne and punishment were
remoued at once.

This may teach vs to strue with the Lord in our pray-
ers and supplications; laboring for this crying and sighing
that is so needefull: and then dooing as here the Church
did, wee shall speed as they did. Many there are that sigh

Iam. 5. 9.

in their troubles. But how? *Iames* telleth vs: *They sigh one against another*; and not vnder the burden of their sinnes, nor through an earnest desire of Gods mercie: They sigh vnder the waight of vnkindnesse that lie vpon them, and clamor against men, but haue little feeling of their owne vnkindnesse against God to bee humbled for them. But these are sighs of the flesh, and not of the spirit. Let vs grone from a broken heart, and the Lord will giue vs life, *when wee are troubled in spirit*: and the longer we waite and crie, the greater measure of comfort we shall haue; and the longer it shall carrie with vs.

Isa. 57. 15.

Verf. 57. *Thou drevest neere.*] Nor in his essence: (for so is hee alwaies alike neere) but in his mercifull presence and with gracious deliuerance. Which words thus vnderstood, doe yeeld vs this point of doctrine:

Doct. 6.

God is as
readie to
heare as
wee to pray.

That in the day that wee draw neere to God in prayer, God will draw neere to vs in mercie: when we send vp our petitions vnto him, he will send downe speedie and comfortable helpe vnto vs. Those that are suiters vnto God, shall bee alwaies sure of good successe: euen aboute that that they can aske or thinke. Whether their requests bee that their enemies may bee repressed, or that their owne corruptions may be subdued, or whatsoeuer els, they shall bee sure to speed well. So saith our Saviour; *Who soeuer asketh receiuet, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall bee opened.* Let one knocke at the chamber of Presence of an earthly King, if he be poore and base, he shall be bid to stand backe: and if he make not the more hast, hee may chance to haue a rappe to send him backward: but let one knocke at Gods presence chamber, how meane and contemptible so euer hee bee, hee shall haue no repulse. As *Dauid* testifieth; *God is neere to all that call vpon him. yea to all that call vpon him in truth: hee will fulfill the desires of those that feare him.* Though their hearts bee so oppressed that they can bring no words, that is no matter: God will haue respect to their verie desires.

Matth. 7. 8.

Ps. 145. 18.

39.

Men will not heare such many times as haue beene good
and

and faithfull seruants vnto them: but God will heare such as haue beene rebels against him, if once his feare be planted in their hearts.

This wee see in the booke of *Chronicles*, where it is said, *2.Chron.* that the *Israelites* lined many yeares without the true God: *19.3.* And why? because they had no preaching, nor powerfull ministerie, no *Priest* to teach them, as there it is said: yet who-soeuer returned in his miserie and sought God, hee was found *Asi.2.* of him: according to that saying, *Who-soeuer shall call vpon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

An example of Gods goodnesse in this regard, we haue in *Jonah*, who albeit hee had dealt foolishly, and was cast into the sea for it, yet God heard him out of the bellie of the fish, and set him vpon the dry land againe. So the theefe on the crosse, had beene a notable malefactor, yet hee no sooner opened his mouth for mercie, but Christ (though in great extremitie at that time) respected him, and his suite: neuer casting him in the teeth with his old sinnes. So *Manasses* had beene a wofull and miserable sinner, yet when hee cried to the Lord in his distresse, hee heard him, set him free, and restored him againe to his kingdome. *Hee had done euill in the sight of the Lord, like the abominations of the heathen: hee reuiued Idolatrie which his father had abolished, worshipped the host of heauen, defiled the Temple of God, caused his sonnes to passe thorow the fire, gaue himselfe to witchcraft, and charming, and sorcerie: and did very much euill in the sight of the Lord, and that to anger him.* After all this, God admonished him by his Prophets, but hee would not beare. Then the Lord brought vpon him the captaines of the host of *Assur*, which put him in fetters and bound him in chaines, and caried him to *Babel*. *Luke 23.42. 43. 2.Chron.33.*

Now being in sore tribulation, he prayed vnto the Lord his God, who was intreated by him, and heard his prayer.

And to shut vp all, whatsoever our case bee, in *Psalme 107.* it is shewed, that if wee seeke to the Lord, wee shal haue helpe. Some are rebels and care not for the word of God, but despise the counsels of the most high; then he casts them.

them in prison, and binds them in brasſe and iron, ſo that all their hope is gone: at length they lay about them to *cry vnto the Lord*; which they can no ſooner doe, *but hee breakes the gates of brasſe and the barres of iron a ſunder*, and ſets them at libertie: ſo that an humble and ſeruent prayer, wee ſee, draws vs out of bondage, and ſets vs at large: and in ſtead of mourning and heauineſſe, giues vs matter of reioycing, and praizing of God.

Another is caſt into the ſea, euery foote readie to bee ſwallowed vp, the Pilot hath neither ſkill nor will to helpe; yet when their prayers aſcend vnto heauen, God rebukes the ſea and the winds, and they *are quickly at the ha- uen where they would be.*

And ſo for famine and euerie other miſerie, God hath a medicine for euerie ſickneſſe, and a ſalue for euery ſore: and when men crie vnto him, hee is readie to help them in all extremities, as is there more particularlie and at large ſpecified.

Uſe 1.

I Which ſerues to reprove our miſerable blindneſſe and hardneſſe, who notwithstanding Gods ſufficiencie and readines to helpe, yet will ſeek vnto vaine helps, digging to our ſelues ceſterns that will hold no water. If the Lord had euer failed vs, or any other that reſted on him, there had beene ſome reaſon to doe ſo: but ſeeing God would haue vs beholding vnto him, and he hath neuer failed any that waited vpon him, why ſhould we not turne to God, rather than goe to any other?

Obiect.

Anſwer.

Oh, but the times are hard, and the world is naught.

It is ſo to you, becauſe you are ſo to God: and iuſt it is that you ſhould not finde reliefe, becauſe you ſeek it not where it might bee found.

Uſe 2.

Secondly, this makes for ſingular conſolation: would wee know how it ſhall goe with vs for bodie and ſoule, for name and ſtate and all; then let vs looke what courſe wee take. Doe wee call vpon the name of God? Then help and comfort is at hand: *God is neere vnto all them that call vpon him in truth*: though not with that ſtrength of faith as they

they should. *If wee seeke him, hee will be found of vs.* Hee li- *Math. 7. 8.*
miteth vs not for time nor things; and therefore we may
looke for helpe at all times, and in all things: and when
wee haue most neede, then wee shall bee sure of the best
helpe.

But if wee would be certaine of this comfort, wee must
withall obserue these rules:

1 That wee put all wickednesse out of our hearts, and *Rules to be*
out of our hands: *that wee humble our selues, and turne from* *observed.*
our wicked waies. Let vs remoue our sinnes, and God will *Iob 11. 14.*
remoue our crosses. So *Iames* exhorts them, *Purge your* *2. Chron. 7.*
hands yee sinners, and your hearts yee hypocrites: that is it that *14.*
they must doe, if they would haue God to *draw neere un-* *Jam. 4. 8.*
to them. For God loues not to dwell in a heart defiled with
sinne: he will turne his eyes and eares from vs, if we conti-
nue in our euill waies: because when our tongues crie for
mercie, our sinnes crie for vengeance.

But, will some man say, who can looke for hearing from *Obiect.*
God, if the case stand thus? for who can come to him with-
out iniquitie?

Though wee cannot come without iniquitie, yet wee *Answer.*
may come without the loue and liking of iniquitie, and
with sorrow and shame for our iniquitie: and then it neuer
hinders our prayers, as wee see in the examples before
alleged.

2 An other rule is, that wee must seeke God by all his
meanes, as in that place of the *Canticles* before alleged, *Cant. 3. 1.*
when the Church had lost Christ, that is, the feeling of *&c.*
his loue, and the sense of that communion which former-
lie she had had with him, she vseth all priuate and publike
meanes, and at length commeth to conference with Gods
seruants, (which few will doe till they be driven to it of ne-
cessitie) and then hauing waited a while, *she finds him whom*
her soule loued. The same must bee our practise: if one me-
dicine will not serue the turne, vse another: Pray, fast, me-
ditate, conserue, and then at last the Lord will be found in
mercie. But as we are slacke in vsing any of the meanes; so
shall

shall wee faile in our comfortable expectation of fauor from God.

3 The last rule is, that we must vse the meanes diligently, and in good earnest: for if wee haue a base account of Gods mercies, it is iust wee should goe without them. The prayer of the righteous auailes much, but with this condition, *if it bee feruent. God deliuereth the poore when he crieth.* If they would haue hearing, there must bee crying. *God powres forth floods of grace: but vpon whom? On the thirstie ground.*

Hence is it that a number reade, and heare, and pray, and yet preuaile not, because they doe it so drowfilie and carelesslie. The Lord deferres to helpe them, because they are not fit for helpe, and doe not striue and wrestle in their prayers as *Iacob* did. Let vs therefore vse all the meanes, and that with constancie and carefulnesse, and then wee shall obtaine our hearts desire in mercie.

Vers. 57. *Thou saidst, Feare not.*] Not that there came any such voice vnto their eares, or that God vsed any extraordinary meanes to speake vnto them, but when they drew neere to God, and cast their cares vpon him, and laid open their sorrowes vnto him, God did so comfort them, as if hee had spoken vnto them: they were content to make him their stay, and to trust him with their soule and state and all, and then hee pacified their hearts, and gaue them an expected answer to their prayers. Now in that God said, *Feare not*, the point is:

Doct. 7.
God onelie
frees the
heart from
feares.
Reasons 1.
Pro. 28. 1.

That God onelie can cure the heart of feares. If ten thousand Prophets had said vnto them, feare not, if God had not said so by his spirit, they would haue feared for al that. For first, men cannot remoue the cause of feare, which God can. Thence it is that the *wicked flee, when none pursueth them*: whereas *the righteous are bold as a Lion*. Because their sinnes are remoued, and they reconciled to God through Christ, who hath made a sufficient payment for them, to satisfie his fathers iustice.

2 Secondly, God onelie can giue faith, which rids the heart

heart of feare: in which regard Christ saith; *why did you feare, O ye of little faith?* Implying thereby, that all our troublesome distempers, proceede from want of faith. Math. 8.

Now because none can giue that but the liuing God, therefore none can heale the heart of feares but onelie God.

3 A third reason is, because God onelie can put his true feare into our hearts, which is a mightie defence against false feares. Godly sorrow is a strong fortresse against worldly sorrow; and godlie ioy a strong bulwarke against carnall ioy. Therefore it is said, Psal. 102. 1. *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, &c. Hee shall not bee afraide of ill tidings.* Jeremy 31.
Ezekiel 3.6.

First this confutes their follie and error, that thinke if Ise 1. they goe two or three miles from the place where the sickness is, and there haue their gates shut, and all things carefullie looked vnto, then they should not bee so fearfull as they are: as if that outward meanes could cure the heart of feares; nay that must bee the Lords worke. If they carrie with them the pestilence of an ill conscience, an heart full of couetousnesse, full of pride, and of worldly lusts, death will enter into the window, if it cannot at the doore, and will finde them out, and set vpon them at midnight, as well as at midday. For God hath a quarrell against their sinnes, and hee will pursue them whithersoer they goe: and how can they stand, when the curse of God hath them in chase? Will you feare the plague-sore vpon the bodie; and will you not much more feare it vpon your soules? Will you fly from that that is but a medicine vnto the godlie; and not from that which is the verie bane of the whole man? In truth those that carrie with them a heart full of pride, and lust, and such iniquities as God abhors, where-soeuer they liue, are in greater danger than the godly that liue in the pest-house it selfe, hauing their hearts purified by faith, and their hope settled vpon Iesus Christ.

And therefore thinke not to put away such feares, by gaming and companie-keeping, by eating and drinking
I and

and laughing: for they will returne againe, though they may be smothered for a time, and an ill conscience will be a fearefull conscience.

1762.

Secondly, this doctrine ministreth vnto vs this instruction, that if we would be disburdened of feares, we should go to God, that can worke in vs a thorow cure. Not as if the meanes of seruing Gods providence, were to be neglected, or as if wee should not walke circumspectlie, and auoide the occasions of danger: But when wee doe so, we should not rest on the meanes, nor thinke, I am out of the place where the plague is, therefore I am free from Gods stroke. If one should say, I cannot die till God haue appointed, and therefore I may goe into places of infection, this were a tempting of God: but it were worse for a wicked sinner to thinke, I am not neere places of infection, therefore I am safe.

Helps a-
gainst feares
1. Prayer.

If then wee would bee soundly cured of feares, first let vs goe vnto the Lord with a broken heart, and beseech him to put courage into vs, and to giue vs assurance of eternall life; and the ioy of the holy Ghost; then come life or death, wee shall not bee much dismayed. This is one speciall meanes, to free our hearts from vnnecessarie feares, euen faithfull prayer: as the Apostle shews, where hee saies, *In nothing bee carefull, but in all things let your requests be made knowne to God, &c.* He bids them not take away the occasions without but heale the heart within; for then they shall bee safe enough: *The peace of God that passeth all understanding, shall keepe their hearts and minds in Christ Iesus:* that is, in a blessed communion with Christ Iesus, whereby they shall bee possessed with such peace as none knoweth what it meanes, but those that haue tasted of it which quiets and sets downe the heart and minde, and settles the same in the assurance of a happie issue, out of all straites and difficulties: as wee see in David, who hauing committed himselfe to God, who was able and had promised to helpe him, hee triumphs over all his enemies, and saith he *will not feare though ten thousand should*

Phil. 4. 6.

Psal. 3.

compasse him round about. That was some oddes: and one would thinke he had little neede to vse such speeches, but rather to runne away as fast as hee could, at least hee should take little sleepe in the night, so long as hee was in such danger: or if hee did lie downe and sleepe, hee should haue little hope to rise againe in the morning: yet wee see vers. 5. that *hee laid him downe and slept, and rose againe, because the Lord sustained him:* and this he got by calling vpon God: as it is vers. 4.

2 Secondly, if we would not be oppressed with feares, labor to be righteous: for wickednesse makes men daftardlie, whereas righteousnesse makes men stout as Lyons, that will not looke ouer the shoulder, for the barking of euery dogge, but walke on without all feare. Indeepe the child of God, will not bee presumptuous; neither will hee bee timorous: though his enemies, sinne, Satan and the world bee strong, yet hee knows God is stronger, and that none euill can come vnto him without the Lord.

2. Righteousnes.
Pro. 28. 1.

Which if wee can thorowly meditate vpon, and take this receite euerie morning, to season our hearts with the feare of God, and to wash our hearts and hands from vnrepented sins; walke where wee will, so it be in our waies, nothing shall be able to hurt vs.

Vers. 58. *Thou hast maintained the cause of my soule.* That is, thou hast stood on my part, and freed mee from death, that was intended against mee. For though my name and libertie and riches bee taken from mee, yet *my life is redeemed:* and that is thy mercie that bodie and soule are not yet parted. Whence the doctrine is:

That God is the maintainer and vpholder of his people. Howsoeuer Kings and Princes bee nursing fathers vnto Gods Church, yet that is not because hee needs them, but because he would doe them a good turne, in employing them in his seruice. And therefore may God be called the vpholder of his people, because he saues them from their

Doct. 8.
God vpholds
his.
Isa. 44. 23.

Jsa. 27. 3.

sinnes; and from the punishments due to their sins, which no man can doe: *He watches ouer them night and day, and waters them euerie moment; and bee will contend with them that contend against his people,*

This should strike a terror into the hearts of those that are iniurious vnto Gods seruants: they are bold where the hedge is lowest; euerie dwarfe aduentures to leape ouer. But let them know, that God is as a wall of fire about his Church, and hee will maintaine the right of his children.

Indeede their props are and still haue beene so weake, their enemies so strong, the standers against them so shamefull, and the oppositions so continuall, that it is a miracle the Church stands to this day: but God hath beene, and euer will bee the vpholder of it, and therefore it must needs goe ill with those, that list vp themselues against it.

Use 2.

Secondly, here is a notable consolation for the afflicted people of God. Howsoeuer they haue fewe meanes and few friends; and where they should haue most helpe they haue least; where they looked for comfort, they finde discomfort; and where they thought to bee enriched, they are impouerished: yet if they can pray, all shall bee well.

If money and friends, and large reuenues and the like, had beene the vpholders of the Church, it would haue gone to the ground long ere this. But what saith the Church here? *O Lord thou hast maintained the cause of my soule.* There is our stay: let vs bee sure wee haue a good cause, and lay it before Gods iudgement seate, and then though wee be overborne, God will not bee overborne, but hee will stand on our side, euen hee that loues goodnesse, and hates wickednesse, and will be auenged on those that bend themselues and their endeours to do mischief vnto his people.

Wee would willinglie haue him to bee our Iudge, who is most iust, who carries the greatest loue to vs and our cause, and the hardest mind against our aduersaries: such

an one is God. And therefore seeing we haue a good cause to stand in, euen the matter of our saluation; and enemies whom God hates with a deadly hatred, the diuell, the world and the flesh, & c. this should put life and heart into vs, to goe vnto Christ Iesus our Iudge, who hath so dearely loued vs, as to lay downe his life for vs, and for the destruction of all our enemies. When wee are ouercharged with burdens and temptations, let vs lay them vpon him, and say, Lord, thou hast vndertaken to comfort thy children: I am not able to vndergoe this that is vpon mee; therefore doe thou maintaine my cause, and helpe and deliuer mee from my miserie.

Verf. 59. *Thou hast seene my wrong.*] From these words this doctrine may be collected:

That there is nothing done, spoken or thought against any Christian, but God takes knowledge of it: there is not one practise, slander or deuice of cruell beasts against the sheepe of Christ, but God sees it, and markes it. And this must needs be so: Doff. 9.
All vnrōgs
knowne to
God.

1 First, because they are his flocke, and therefore hee loues to looke vnto them, especiallie sith hee hath paided so deere for them. Reason 1.

2 Secondly, it is his nature to behold all things. *For he that made the eye, shall not he see? &c.* He is *aboue vs all,* and *through vs all,* and *in vs all.* Yea, wee are as it were the *apple of his eye.* Now it is a hard matter for one to come with thornes to put out anothers eye, and he not take notice of it: and Psal. 94.
Eph. 4. 6.

3 Thirdly, God doth the rather obserue the indignities that are offered vnto his children, because their profane aduersaries doe hate his image in them. For when they were as bad as themselves, they could liue with them twentie or thirtie yeares, and be good friends with them: but when once they renounce the seruice of Satan and of their owne lusts, vnto which they are in bondage still, then they oppose with might and maine against them: and therefore it is said, *for thy sake haue we suffered rebuke, shame* Psal. 69. 7.
hath

bash covered our face.

*Reuel. 20.
12.*

4 The fourth and last reason, why God must needs take notice of the wrongs done vnto his seruants, is, because it belongs to him to *rewards euerie one according to their workes*. Hee must and will giue them full pay, and therefore hee keeps all vpon iust and due record. As the workes of the righteous shall stand for them, so shall the workes of reprobates be written in great capitall letters against them, that all the world may take notice of them at the last day.

vse.

This offers vnto vs matter of singular comfort. Howsoeuer the aduersaries be busie and watchful to plot and procure the hurt of Gods Church; they cannot be so vigilant for the hurt of it, as God is watchfull for the good of it; and therefore they may bee sure they shall haue a happie issue out of all their troubles, if so be they can make their mone to God, and waite patientlie for his mercie.

Obiection.

But what neede wee lay open our griefes before him, seeing that hee knows them all before hand?

Answer.

Though he doe know them, yet he would haue you to preferre your bill of complaint, and that will be for the increase of your comfort, and further experience of his loue: and howsoeuer hee purpose to destroy the wicked, yet would he haue you to go on in your suite against them still.

Neither is this to bee restrained onelie to corporall enemies; but it holds much more strongly for spirituall enemies. Say a man bee sarcharged with sinne and Satan, let him bemoane his case before the Lord, and it will be a marueilous ease vnto him. If one of our children should but say, father or mother, I am exceeding sicke, readie to faint vnder my paines &c. hee neede say no more: this would set their hearts and hands a worke to doe him good. And is there not far more loue in our heavenly Father? Yes surely: and therefore in all such extremities, let God be our refuge, and let vs cast all our cares and sorrows vpon him, who is able and willing to beare them, and in due season to free vs from them, and in the end, to make vs gainers by them.

FINIS.